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ANTON SEIDL

A MEMORIAL

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ANTON SEIDL

A MEMORIAL



FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY WILHELM



Ernst soll die Kunst sein, doch
heiter das Leben!

Anton Seidl Yrs. newyork 18th Oct. 1895.

ANTON SEIDL

A MEMORIAL BY
HIS FRIENDS

NEW YORK
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PREFACE

SHORTLY after Anton Seidl's death several of his friends suggested that I should write a book about him, biographic and critical. As I happened to be at work on two other books which absorbed all my spare time, I at first looked on the proposal as impracticable; but one morning the thought came into my mind, "Why not contribute a chapter or two myself and let Mr. Seidl's other friends—singers, players, composers, critics—write the others?" The rest of the plan was soon sketched. The book was to be a labor of love for all concerned and the friends appealed to responded cordially. Lilli Lehmann and Marianne Brandt, in far-off Germany and Austria, sent their contributions first, and the others followed promptly. The contributions are printed exactly as they were sent, except that some had to be translated. The blue pencil was used in a few places, to avoid repetition of biographic facts or anecdotes; but this could not be done in all cases, on account

of the connection. It is hardly necessary to add that I am responsible for all the literary interludes connecting the various contributions.

In preparing the biographic chapter I had the advantage of the co-operation of Mrs. Seidl. I asked her, since she naturally knew so much more about her late lamented husband than any one else, to write a chapter of reminiscences, or, at any rate, to jot down copious notes about his career, his character and habits, so that I might incorporate them in the biographic chapter. She demurred at first, on the ground that she had never written anything for the printer, and was not even a good letter writer, but finally consented. The result proved so eminently satisfactory that I found I could use her manuscript (in translation) exactly as sent in, except that I found it advisable to divide it into sections and put each in its proper place in quotation marks. Thus the reader will always know what part of the story is hers.

Schiller said that "for actors posterity has no wreaths." Anton Seidl was like an actor in so far as he was not a creator, but only an interpreter. He was, however, like Liszt or Rubinstein, a creative interpreter, inspired, enthusiastic, authoritative. He preached the gospel of the greatest composer of the nineteenth century on two continents. He was the first to conduct Wagner's greatest works in many German cities, as well as in Italy,

England and America. In America, especially, he will always be identified with the acclimatization of Wagner's operas. The twelve years he labored in New York were years during which Wagner's art took firm root in American soil. He did not reap the full material compensation for his labors. All the more does he deserve a reward like this volume, which will remain not only as a monument to his interpretative genius and his worth as a man, but also as a milestone marking the most important twelve years in the history of music in America.

To all those who have so generously helped to make this book a success, Mrs. Seidl asks me to express in this place her heartfelt thanks; also to the publishers, Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons, for their kindness in waiving all share of the profits; to Messrs. D. Appleton & Co. for courteous permission to reprint from their sumptuous volumes, *Music of the Modern World*, Seidl's article on Conducting, which is second in value only to Wagner's own essay on the same subject; and to Messrs. Falk, Wilhelm, and Aimé Dupont, for permission to use copyright photographs.

HENRY T. FINCK.

NEW YORK, March 1, 1899.

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BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH

BY

HENRY T. FINCK

INCLUDING

MRS. SEIDL'S MEMOIRS

BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH

IT is an odd fact that most of the great Wagnerian conductors were born in Hungary. Liszt, Hans Richter, Nikisch, Sucher, came from the land where the fiery Magyars and gipsies dwell, and so did Anton Seidl. He was born at Budapest on the sixth of May, 1850, the year when Liszt took pity on Wagner and brought out his three-year-old *Lohengrin* which no one else had dared to touch, because it was believed to be an "impossible" opera.

The parents of Anton Seidl intended him to become a priest. As a boy he seemed to be willing enough to gratify their desire; he liked to assemble his playmates about him, read mass, dispense a blessing, and imitate other things he had seen in church. Yet this did not prevent him from riding his hobby-horse, singing rhythmically, "Tschin daratta, bum, bum, bum," and exclaiming, "I want to be a conductor." His musical talent was revealed at an early age. He was a boy prodigy, and was only six years old when he first played the piano at a charity concert. In school he played the organ for the Fathers and became director of the male chorus. Nicolitsch, of the National Academy of Music, gave him lessons in harmony and counter-

point. But his chief delight was the grand opera. He attended performances as often as possible, and when he got home would sit up late at night trying to repeat on the piano the melodies he had heard at the theatre, as well as to imitate the gestures of the conductor, who seemed to him a most important personage. When he heard *Lohengrin* for the first time he was so deeply affected that he made up his mind firmly to become a musician, and his parents who had at first opposed his musical inclinations, finally yielded.

STUDENT LIFE AT LEIPSIC

Leipsic was at that time still the centre of musical life in Germany, and to that city, accordingly, he went in 1870, aged twenty years. His object being to obtain a general education as well as a musical training, he not only became a pupil at the famous conservatory, but also was immatriculated as a student at the university, where he attended lectures on Logic, Philosophy and Musical History. At the conservatory he studied the piano under Coccius and Wenzel, the organ under Papperitz, harmony and thoroughbass under Oscar Paul and E. F. Richter.

When Anton Seidl took his oath of allegiance before the rector of the university he stood next to Adalbert Schueler, who soon became one of his most intimate friends, and remained so to the last day of the great conductor's life, his final act of friendship being a short address spoken at the open bier. To Mr. Schueler I am indebted for some unpublished anecdotes and reminiscences relating to the student years of his friend. While by no means inclined to neglect his lessons, Anton Seidl found more food for his mind in the numerous concerts and operatic performances offered in Leipsic. Nor was he averse to enjoying

a convivial evening with friends; and thus it happened that once in a while the motto, "business before pleasure," was reversed. One of these "larks" and its sequel is thus described by Mr. Schueler:

"In 1872 Anton Seidl was a member of a class in counterpoint under Dr. Oscar Paul, of the Leipsic Conservatory. There was a good deal of writing to be done, and it was often almost impossible to find the necessary time for writing out all the examples given. As Anton Seidl was at the same time attending the university, he occasionally visited some of those meetings of students, from which 'they wouldn't go home till morning.' Such a protracted meeting of jolly students would naturally conflict seriously with the examples in counterpoint. It was on one of these occasions that Mr. Seidl came to my 'den' one evening and said: 'I am going to be out with the boys to-night and have not yet done anything towards my counterpoint lesson for to-morrow morning. I hate to skip it, and yet I cannot attend without some written examples. Have you got time to write some examples for me?' As I had done most of my examples, I promised, and he left his book with me.

"In the morning he came to his class room late; so I had just time to give him his book before he handed it to the professor. It was too late to look over the lesson I had written for him. Dr. Paul, who was sitting at the table, opened the book, Mr. Seidl standing a little behind him to his right, I to his left. The professor, whose delight it was to hunt and find mistakes and to make the most of his 'find' in the way of sneering and scolding, began to read, with pencil in hand. All at once the pencil came down with a plunge on some unfortunate note. "Dummes Zeug! What do you mean by this note?" He looked up in Seidl's face with a frown. Now, although Seidl

felt perfectly innocent in regard to that note, he felt also that he had to father the mistake, whatever it might be. He knew, too, that since he never had seen it, he would not be able to explain it. So he did his best to gain time, by taking off his glasses and thoroughly wiping them. I had been watching the professor's pencil from the beginning, and seeing the mistake, said: 'I think that note ought to be *a* instead of *b*.' Turning his head to me over his left shoulder, the professor inquired: 'What in the world do you know about it?' 'Oh, I was simply looking into the book over your shoulder and saw the mistake,' was my answer. Seidl still kept on wiping his glasses with a vengeance. 'Well, *a* will do,' said the professor, and went on reading.

"Unfortunately this was not the only time that the professor's pencil struck a snag. But wherever it happened, the same peculiar conditions of the atmosphere compelled Seidl to wipe his glasses, and the unwary professor gradually got in the way of asking questions over his right and getting the answers over his left shoulder. Subsequently it always seemed to both of us like a miracle that we were not suspected and caught in the game we played. One other occasion after that, similar circumstances induced me to write an exercise in Seidl's book, but the scare we had had taught us a lesson. We both were very particular that Mr. Seidl should see what I had written before the professor saw it."

Another episode relating to this period is thus described by Mr. Schueler:

"In the autumn of 1870 Anton Seidl entered the organ class of Dr. Papperitz, of which class the writer of this also was a member. The lessons at that time were given on the old worn-out organ of the still older St. Peter's Kirche. Anton Seidl, who had never sat on an organ-bench before, was asked

to take his seat. Being unacquainted with the dangers of a 'loaded organ,' he innocently stepped between bench and organ, and had both his feet planted squarely on the pedals before the unsuspecting professor could prevent it. The result, as may be imagined, was startling, and the face of Anton Seidl was a puzzle. 'Take your feet off the pedals!' exclaimed the excited professor. Up went one foot, then the other; the organ kept up its dismal noise. Above its roar was heard the voice of the professor, 'Sit down and lift your feet!' which he finally did."

WITH HANS RICHTER

During the two years that he studied in Leipsic, the progress of the Wagner movement throughout Germany engaged his special attention. He knew, among other things, that Hans Richter had been with Wagner in 1866 to 1867, preparing the *Meistersinger* score for the press; that he was subsequently appointed Director of the Chorus at the Royal Opera in Munich, and that he brought out *Lohengrin* at Brussels, in 1870. He felt sure that no one except, perhaps, Hans von Bülow, could have penetrated so deeply into the secrets of Wagnerian interpretation, and, therefore, when he heard that Richter had gone to Budapest as conductor of the opera, he made up his mind to return to his native city and beg Richter to accept him as a pupil. Richter readily consented, instructing him also in the scores of the classic masters, and he soon became so convinced of his pupil's extraordinary talent that, when Wagner wrote to him, in 1872, asking him to help him in finding a talented young man who could assist him in his work at Bayreuth, he promptly recommended Anton Seidl for the place. It was a stroke of luck such as the young man had never thought of in his wildest dreams, and he did not need Richter's admoni-

tion that he had before him a rare opportunity for becoming a great interpreter. He knew, as well as his teacher, that there were certain things—the most important of all—which he could learn only from the master himself. So it was with eager expectations, and a heart throbbing with joy, that he packed his trunk and took the train for Bayreuth.

IN WAGNER'S HOUSE

Why was Wagner so anxious to have an assistant? The following extract from one of his letters to Liszt, at an earlier period, will answer that question:

"I am working with all my energies. Could you not send me a man who would be able to take my wild lead-pencil sketches and make a cleanly-copied score of them? I am working this time on a plan quite different from my former one. But the copying is killing me! It makes me lose time of which I might make more precious use; and, besides, the constant writing fatigues me so much that it makes me ill, and causes me to lose the mood for the real work of creating. Without such a clever assistant I am lost; with him I could have the *whole* [Tetralogy] completed in *two* years."

In another place Wagner refers to his sketches in these words: "Everything written with pencil illegibly in single sheets. It is altogether too difficult to copy them in *my* way, especially as the sketches often really are dreadfully confused, so that only I can decipher them." It took a thorough musician to do this work, and Wagner soon found that Anton Seidl was just the man he wanted. He kept him in his house six years while he was completing the *Götterdämmerung* score and composing *Parsifal*, and thus it came about that Anton Seidl had the honor and advantage of becoming one of the four only

pupils Wagner ever had, the other three having been Hans von Bülow, Karl Ritter, and Hans Richter.

Having been so long a member of Wagner's household, Anton Seidl had many interesting things to relate about the great master, and one of the most regrettable things about his early and sudden death is that he had never written his reminiscences of that period. To his friends he used to relate how Wagner composed. He always carried some sheets of music paper in his pocket, on which he jotted down with a pencil such ideas as came to him on solitary walks, or at other times. These he gave to his wife, who inked them over and arranged them in piles. In these sketches the vocal part was always written out in full, while the orchestral part was roughly indicated in two or more staves. Whenever the master was in the mood for composing, he would say to Seidl: "Bring me my sketches," and the pupil would pick out the parts he happened to be at work on. Then Wagner would retire to his composing room, to which no one was admitted, not even his wife and children. After elaborating the melodic, harmonic and rhythmic details of his score he considered his main task done, and the orchestration was completed downstairs in the music room.

Probably no task that Wagner ever had puzzled him so much as that of writing a march for the Philadelphia Centennial. He had never been in America, knew little of our musical atmosphere, and had nothing to inspire him. Mr. Seidl told me how Wagner secured a collection of American tunes, but could find nothing in it to suit him. For a time he was really distressed, not knowing whether he could keep his promise. But one day, as he was emerging from a dark lane in Bayreuth into daylight, the idea of the triplets which pervade the march occurred to him suddenly; and Mr. Seidl vividly remembered the master's joy

at having at last found a theme on which he could lavish his stirring harmonies and wealth of orchestral colors.

An anecdote regarding *Parsifal*, which is related in my *Wagner and his Works*, may also be fitly reproduced here as showing the relations between master and pupil. When Seidl had become Wagner's secretary he one day heard him play the enchanting strains of the Flower Girl scene, which naturally made an indelible impression on him. Some years later, when he was putting the sketches into rough shape for practical use, Wagner played various parts for him. When he came to the Flower Girl music, Seidl remarked, "Ah, I know that!" whereupon Wagner jumped up excitedly, almost angrily, and wanted to know where he had heard it. He was pacified after the matter had been explained, but the shock remained in his memory a long time, and every now and then he would say to Seidl: "Well, have you found any more familiar things in my music?"

CONCERTS IN BERLIN

In the spring of 1875 Wagner went to Berlin to give two concerts with the Bilse Orchestra. "He appeared at the first with the young Anton Seidl at his side," relates Franz Fridberg in the *Berliner Tageblatt*. After telling how Seidl became Wagner's secretary, Herr Fridberg continues:

"In time he became Wagner's right hand; he was, in fact, the real conductor of our rehearsals. It was impossible to conceive all that this young man from Budapest heard and knew by heart. Before Wagner himself had noted errors in his own music, Seidl could be seen flying over chairs and desks to correct the blunder. The Master viewed the actions of his young famulus with paternal love, and repeatedly I heard him murmur, 'Ho, he! What would I do without my Seidl?' If Seidl disappeared for a mo-

ment, and things began to go a bit at sixes and sevens, Wagner would look about anxiously and cry, 'Help, Seidl!' and Seidl would come with flying leaps to set things to rights. In one passage it seemed impossible to achieve what was wanted of the bass trumpet. The player was an excellent trumpeter, but could not understand the exotic instrument. In vain did Seidl labor with him, sing the passage, rewrite it for him, explain it over and over again; it wouldn't go. Wagner, too, tried his eloquence, but with as little success. At length Seidl turned to the Director's stand and said, 'Master, it is impossible for me to make the man play it.' 'For me, too,' replied Wagner, angrily, and the two looked at each other despairingly. All at once the figure of Bilse rose up beside the trumpeter, took the instrument from his hand and played the passage perfectly. Bilse, a practical man and routinier, had, as usual, found a way out of the difficulty; the man grasped what was wanted, and played the passage in turn correctly and with surety. Wagner turned to Seidl, and in his Saxon dialect observed, 'There, you see, Seidl, Bilse can do what the two of us couldn't.' Five years later I heard *Die Götterdämmerung* under Seidl's direction in Leipsic. Not long before I had heard the first and second performances of the tremendous work in Munich under Levy. Without wishing in the least to depreciate the merits of this great artist, I must say that, for me, Seidl's conception was the greater. There was in it more life, more movement, more poetry. In fact, I received the impression that night that of all the conductors I had got acquainted with, Seidl was the chosen interpreter of Wagner."

THE FIRST BAYREUTH FESTIVAL

It was also Anton Seidl's happy privilege to assist at the rehearsals and performances of the Nibelung Tetralogy at the

first Bayreuth Festival in 1876. In the article on Conducting, reprinted elsewhere in this volume, Mr. Seidl himself gives us an interesting glimpse of his duties on this occasion. Before the stage rehearsals began, Wagner said to him: "My boy, you must help me on the stage, behind the scenes. You and your colleague Fischer (subsequently Court Conductor at Munich) must assume responsibility on the stage for everything that has anything to do with music—that is, you must act as a sort of musical stage manager. You will see the importance of this yourself, and you will find that it will be of infinite effect upon your future as a conductor." "Later," continues Mr. Seidl, "we were joined by Mottl, and naturally we undertook the unique work with tremendous enthusiasm. Wagner was wont to call us playfully his three Rhine daughters, for the first rehearsal under his care was devoted to the first scene of *Das Rheingold*. I was in charge of the first wagon, which carried Lilli Lehmann, who sang the part of Woglinde. Little did I suspect that in after years Lilli would sing the part of Brünnhilde under my direction." In the other operas he similarly took care that certain scenic details were carried out in harmony with the music.

RECOMMENDED BY WAGNER

Mr. Seidl now believed that the time had arrived when he ought to utilize his acquired knowledge in spreading the gospel of Wagner's art. Having heard that there was an opening at Mayence, he approached Wagner, who addressed the following letter to Dr. Strecker, manager of the well-known music publishing house of B. Schott's Sons: "Esteemed doctor: I have just read an advertisement in regard to the vacancy in the conductor's place at Mainz. I beg you to use all your influence to secure this position for my young friend and adjutant, Anton

Seidl (at present here). He conducts excellently, is very energetic and reliable, and I vouch for him in every way. He would be ready to begin on September 1. I have taken it upon myself to find a good place for him, and would consider it a special act of friendship if my wish could be gratified through your kindly intervention." The letter, however, came too late. The position had already been assigned to another applicant—luckily for Anton Seidl, who remained a while longer with his master and afterwards found a much wider field of usefulness than a small city like Mayence could have offered him.

WAGNER'S FIRST SYMPHONY

It was in the year of the first Bayreuth festival that Richard Wagner founded a sort of museum of manuscripts and other articles relating to his life, for the benefit of his son Siegfried. Among other things he was anxious to include in it the manuscript of his first symphony, which had been lost ever since 1848. He asked some of his friends to search for it, and they succeeded in finding the parts in a trunk which Wagner had left in the house of the tenor Tichatschek when he had to leave Dresden suddenly because of his participation in the revolutionary uprising. Wagner was delighted to recover this juvenile effort, and he asked Anton Seidl to combine the parts into a score and to add the two missing trombone parts. Six years later Wagner asked Seidl to come to Venice to supervise the production of this symphony; but, unfortunately, his favorite interpreter was unable to get leave of absence from his manager. We shall see later on how this annoyed him.

During these last years of his life Wagner intrusted all important enterprises to Anton Seidl, whenever he was consulted about them, and this enabled the young conductor to fan the

flame of enthusiasm for his adored master in various German and foreign cities. In 1879 he assisted at the rehearsals for the Wagner festival in London, and previously, in 1877 and 1878, Wagner had sent him to Leipsic and Vienna to give the singers at the opera the benefit of his thorough knowledge of the Nibelung scores. In the following year he was engaged as conductor of the opera at Leipsic, where he astonished the conservative natives by the most stirring interpretations of Wagner's works. It was there that I for the first time had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Seidl conduct, and I now realize, better than I did then, that it was his interpretative genius that there made me appreciate the Nibelung dramas in some respects even more than I had appreciated them at Bayreuth.

SEIDL SURPRISES WAGNER

Of what great importance to the cause of Wagnerism Anton Seidl was is made apparent by the manner in which he won a success at Leipsic for *Tristan and Isolde*. Wagner, discouraged by the fate of this difficult work at several opera houses, had made up his mind not to allow it thereafter to be given anywhere except under his own supervision. When Angelo Neumann, manager of the Leipsic Opera, first asked permission to produce this opera, Wagner refused; but subsequently, in view of the cooperation of Seidl, he gave his consent. What the result was may be inferred from a letter to Neumann that Wagner wrote at Palermo on January 16, 1882, in which occurs this passage:

"My excellent friend and patron!

"It was kind on your part to write to me about the success of the *Tristan* performance at your theatre. . . You are aware that I had made up my mind to allow this problematic work to be given hereafter only under my personal supervision: now it

has succeeded without me—and that astonishes me! Well, good luck! I certainly discover in Seidl hidden faculties which only require a fostering warmth to surprise even myself; therefore, I beg you now, for the sake of the *ensemble*, to allow him even in the scenic department more authority than is usually granted to conductors, *for in that direction lies what he especially learned from me.* . . Kindest greetings to Seidl and his admirable company."

Under such circumstances it was a matter of course that when the Travelling Wagner Theatre was organized, Anton Seidl was first of all secured for the conductorship. What was the Travelling Wagner Theatre? It was a project of Angelo Neumann's to take Bayreuth, so to speak, on a trip through Europe. He believed that if a company of first-class Wagner singers were brought together, with Anton Seidl at their head, for a series of Nibelung performances, the enterprise would be attended by great success. Wagner would have preferred to have Europe come to Bayreuth, but as he had not the means to give another Nibelung festival at that time, he gave his consent and blessing to Neumann's grand undertaking.

THE TRAVELLING WAGNER THEATRE

The original company included Hedwig Reicher-Kindermann, Marianne Brandt, Auguste Kraus, Katharine Klafsky, Anton Schott, Julius Liban, George Unger, and on special occasions, Materna, and others. Performances were given in various cities of Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland and England. Altogether, from September 1, 1882, to June 5, 1883, the number of performances of the Nibelung operas given on the Continent was 135, nearly all of which Seidl conducted, beside 58 Wagner concerts. Thus Anton Seidl had the privilege of first interpreting Wagner's great work in many German cities,

and in several foreign countries, to which America was added later.

Before the last performance given by this company (at Graz), Angelo Neumann delivered an address to his artists, in course of which he said: "A special word of thanks is due to you, Kapellmeister Seidl, and your orchestra. The achievements of the orchestra, and your inspired interpretations, have aroused the admiration of, I might say, the whole world, and I hope we shall yet win many a victory together."

Previous to the long tour of the Traveling Wagner Theatre, Anton Seidl had distinguished himself in Berlin (1881–82) by conducting, at the Victoria Theatre, the first performances of the Nibelung dramas ever produced in that city. Four cycles were given with such brilliant success that the company returned the next year from Leipsic and gave Nibelung performances for several months. Excellent as were the cooperating vocalists, it was conceded that the lion's share of the triumph was due to Anton Seidl, in spite of the fact that he had to put up with an inferior Berlin orchestra. In a letter which I wrote at the time, and which was printed in the New York *Nation* (June 16, 1881), I said that the orchestra reminded me of "a mediocre instrument played by a man of genius." Wagner was present at these performances, and often expressed his pleasure at the achievements of his pupil. It may be added here that the last letter he wrote was addressed to Angelo Neumann, and contained the words "Seidl delights me greatly."

COURTSHIP DAYS

As good luck would have it, the Traveling Wagner Theatre had included, among its members, Fräulein Auguste Kraus, a blonde beauty of the Viennese type. Good luck, both because



Mrs. Seidl
1886

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Previous to the long tour of the Traveling Wagner Theatre, Anton Seidl had distinguished himself in Berlin (1881–82) by conducting, at the Victoria Theatre, the first performances of the Nibelung dramas ever produced in that city. Four cycles were given with such brilliant success that the company returned the next year from Leipsic and gave Nibelung performances for several months. Excellent as were the co-operating vocalists, it was conceded that the lion's share of the triumph was due to Anton Seidl, in spite of the fact that he had to put up with an inferior Berlin orchestra. In a letter which I wrote at the time, and which was printed in the New York *Nation* (June 16, 1881), I said that the audiences rewarded me of "a mediocre instrument played by a mere virtuoso." Wagner was present at these performances, and often expressed his pleasure at the achievements of his pupil. It may be added here that the last letter he wrote was addressed to Angelo Neumann, and contained the words "Seidl delights me greatly."

COURTSHIP DAYS

As good luck would have it, the Traveling Wagner Theatre had included, among its members, Fräulein Auguste Kraus, a blonde beauty of the Viennese type. Good luck, both because

Mrs. Seidl
1886



FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY FALK

she was an admirable interpreter of the lighter soprano rôles in Wagner's operas (she sang Wellgunde, Sieglinde, Gutrune; also Eva, Elsa, etc.), and because it was in this tournée that Anton Seidl wooed and won her as his wife—a wife who for a few years after marriage continued her professional career, and then gave herself up entirely to the devoted care of her beloved husband. Mrs. Seidl has written for this book the following account of this interesting period:

"When I first became acquainted with Anton Seidl, I had been taking lessons for a short time only. About that time the 'ensemble' of the first act of *Lohengrin* was being produced, in which I was singing the part of Elsa. We were quite alarmed when we were told that Anton Seidl of Bayreuth, who was then on a visit at Hans Richter's, would be present on the occasion. Young as he was then, he looked very serious, had a big pair of spectacles and long hair, much longer than he wore it in later years. He did not speak one word, not a muscle in his face indicated whether he was pleased or not; I was, therefore, not a little proud when told afterwards that he had spoken approvingly of my voice and remarked that the blonde Elsa would achieve success.

"The following year I had the good fortune of meeting him again; as a pupil of Hans Richter I enjoyed the privilege of attending all the performances of the Nibelung's Ring at Bayreuth; then later on at Vienna, whither the master sent him to see to it that the Trilogy was studied in the spirit of his beloved master. At that time he was offered an engagement at the city theatre of Leipsic. Two years later I was engaged there for the youthful dramatic rôles at the Opera, and only then I began to know him better. We were generally all assembled for rehearsal before he in his characteristically slow way would step out of a

still slower cab and make his way towards the stage. Once he remarked, when the question as to the musical ability of the different singers came up for discussion, that, in spite of my usual correctness, he was almost willing to wager that in the second act of the *Meistersinger*, before the duet with Hans Sachs ('Good evening, master, still so busy?'), if his song should be followed by loud applause, so that I would be unable to hear the orchestra, I would fail to begin in the right place. Naturally I did not agree with him, and when, on the following day I sang Eva, I had no idea that he was in earnest when he told me he would give me no clue. Schelper, after singing 'How sweetly smell the elder blossoms!' was loudly applauded, but I counted my measures, so that, in spite of my not hearing the orchestra well, I succeeded in coming in at the proper time. How surprised I was, when my part came, to see my dear conductor looking into his score without making a sign for me—a proceeding which, however, did not prevent me from singing correctly. He told me afterwards that he would not have acted thus, if he had not been perfectly sure that I would come out all right.

THE LONDON BARBER

"In May, 1882, the Richard Wagner Theatre Company went to London to produce the Nibelung Trilogy. One day there was great excitement among the artists during a rehearsal. What had become of Seidl? Was he sick? Who was the man at the desk in his place? These were the questions asked by the artists, for Seidl was to conduct all the rehearsals as well as the performances, yet here was a stranger with his back towards the stage. Suddenly the lights were turned on higher, and at the same moment the face of the conductor was turned towards us. After staring a moment, we all burst out laughing. The conductor was

no one else than Anton Seidl. But how changed he was in appearance! At that time he knew very little English, so, wishing to have his hair cut, he entered a barbershop and intimated pantomimically that he wanted about an inch cut off his hair. Then he sat in the chair and buried himself in a newspaper. When he got up and looked in the glass he found that the barber had misunderstood his pantomime and cut his hair down to an inch! Of course, besides the loss of his hair he had to endure the gibes of the whole company.

"During the winter of 1882–83 we undertook the great Richard Wagner Tournée throughout Germany and gave the Nibelungen in all the large cities of Germany, Holland, Belgium and Italy with excellent result. We had an excellent company, including Reicher-Kindermann, Marianne Brandt, Vogl and his wife from Munich, Schott, and on some occasions Scaria and Materna. The orchestra comprised 56 to 60 excellent players, thoroughly drilled by Anton Seidl, who aroused with it everywhere demonstrations of the greatest enthusiasm. Every one did homage to Anton Seidl. At Berlin he was asked to conduct a concert for the benefit of the sufferers by the floods. The Empress Augusta Victoria had undertaken the patronage of this great charity performance. The ladies of the highest aristocracy likewise took part; they wanted to please Anton Seidl by presenting him with a costly watch studded with diamonds, accompanied by a dedication in the handwriting of the Empress herself. Now, what do you suppose Anton Seidl did? He refused the costly gift and declared himself amply rewarded by the letter from the Empress, and prayed that the amount paid for the watch be added to the fund collected for the sufferers by the flood. He declared that the letter of the Empress would be kept sacred as an heirloom of his family.

" Perhaps it was not diplomatic on his part to refuse the gift of these ladies who were eager to do him a service ; but such conduct gives an insight into his noble and generous character. Disinterested in the highest degree, he would never do anything merely to win the applause of the public, and in this respect his simplicity was really touching. Often when the audience persisted, after a performance which had come up to his expectations, in calling him before the curtain, he afterwards received us in his room at the theatre with demonstrations of the greatest delight ; a happy smile diffused itself over his usually serious features. When, on the other hand, the representation had not been satisfactory, according to his high standard, no amount of applause gave him satisfaction.

AT AMSTERDAM AND BERLIN

" At Amsterdam I was to sing the part of Eva in the quintet (*Meistersinger*) for the first time in the concert hall. As the introduction to the quintet is not the same in the concert version as in the opera—and I had not sung the part for some time—I asked the theatre attendant for the music, but he did not get it. The rehearsal came on and I had no music ; so I told the conductor, ' Kindly excuse me if I make any blunders, for I found it absolutely impossible to get the music.' Then you should have heard him telling me before the whole orchestra, ' That is no excuse ; when it is a question of the *Meistersinger* you ought to have gone from one music store to another until you found it.' I retorted, somewhat sharply, that it was not my duty to go hunting scores, inasmuch as my contract declared that all the music was to be supplied to me. He answered, sarcastically, ' Of course, a spoiled Viennese princess like you doesn't need to do such a thing.' I was furious, for he was the first man

who had been impolite to me. When we sat down to dinner at the Hotel Amstel, where on first nights we were in the habit of sitting at a large table, I sat opposite him. I gave vent to my anger by telling him that he overstepped his right by treating me as he did, and 'from to-day, Mr. Conductor, you are a nobody to me. I know my parts, thank heaven, and do not require your bâton to guide me!' I kept my word, too, and never looked in his direction while singing, and never made a mistake, either. This again angered him, for he could not help seeing that I was right. I remained steadfast for a full fortnight when, one day, after rehearsal, he 'threw a wheel' with his body, and rolled around the parlor to the utmost astonishment of all present. Heinrich Vogl said to me about that time, 'Remember what I tell you, you will surely be Seidl's wife yet; he is over head and ears in love with you.' But I would not agree to that, declaring that I would never marry anyone connected with a theatre; that my chosen one would have to wear a full black beard, and under no circumstance could I love Anton Seidl, who had treated me so uncourteously at a rehearsal. My dear Tony acknowledged to me later on that he had been angry only because he knew well that I was perfectly familiar with the quintet, and that once for all he had wished to drive such whims out of my head—'Prima Donna whims' he called them—but such things were not in harmony with my natural simplicity.

ADVENTURES IN ITALY

"Our company comprised 130 persons, and we always took an extra train. Sometimes the whole company was in the cars, only Anton Seidl was absent; he slept so soundly towards morning that he could hardly be awakened. This was quite natural, for he had to conduct every day and make, in addition to this,

the many exhausting journeys. In no one city, Berlin excepted, could we give more than the Tetralogy and one concert, and usually after the performance we had to take the train and travel night and day for the sake of giving a single concert. Then we had to travel again, and so it went on all the time. Once, at Carlsruhe, we were all in our seats when the rumor circulated, 'Seidl is not here yet.' The engineer waited five, ten minutes, then declared that he could wait no longer, and, just as the train was starting, the head of Anton Seidl appeared at the gate gazing at the retreating train. Everybody was excited, not knowing whether he could take a later train and reach us in time, because without him we could not have given a performance. By good fortune he succeeded in reaching us at the proper time, but from that time forward the theatre servant was instructed to keep a close watch on him, and never to allow him to sleep too long.

"Of his great forgetfulness I may cite the following instances: On our journey through Italy he bought a very fine walking-stick, which afforded him much pleasure, but when he reached the hotel he had left his cane in the railroad car; the same thing happened with a big Calabrian hat which he left at the hotel and never recovered. The lost rubber shoes and umbrellas would furnish a store. In Venice he told us that a big package of linen had been directed to him from Hanover, but as he did not remember having left any, it must be a mistake. It was in the preceding September, when he was at Hanover, that he had intrusted his underwear to a washerwoman; thence the bundle had been forwarded from city to city until, finally, it reached him at Venice, in April, seven months later. But he had not the remotest idea that anything was missing in his wardrobe. The same thing happened, unfortunately, with many letters and souvenirs from Richard Wagner; he had placed them with other

documents in a chest. One day a friend said to him, 'Mr. Seidl, your trunk is burst open at the railway station, and the wind has scattered your papers. The people are picking up your valuables; if you hurry you may be able to save some of them.' On that occasion he lost most of his letters from Richard Wagner, and the loss was a deep anguish to him.

WAGNER'S DEATH

"One evening at Aix-la-Chapelle, Mr. Seidl talked for a long time about his disappointment because Director Angelo Neumann had refused to let him go for the Christmas holidays to Venice, where Wagner had requested him to come and assist in the production of his symphony. 'As soon as this tournée is over, I shall fly to my master,' he said; 'I cannot endure the separation any longer.' The following morning we were all thunderstruck by the news of Richard Wagner's death. Neumann, very naturally, was desirous of postponing the performance of *Rheingold* and Seidl did not wish to conduct. But Neumann was compelled to give the opera, and Seidl had to conduct, though he did it with a bleeding heart. The tears were streaming from his eyes during the performance, and he was utterly prostrated by the sad news. On the following morning he left for Bayreuth to attend the funeral. It was his sad privilege to help, with Hans Richter, Mottl, and Fischer, to carry the mortal remains of the master to the grave.

"The Nibelungen met with extraordinary success in Italy, both artistically and pecuniarily. The public of Venice (the first Italian city we visited) was enthusiastic from the beginning—wanted the first scene of the Rhinedaughters repeated, nay, wanted even Mime to repeat 'Sorglose Schmiede,' and when finally Frau Reicher-Kindermann, with her superbly powerful and beau-

tiful voice, sang the part of Erda, the applause threatened to last forever. The *Walküre* met with still greater success; Schott and I were, after the first act, called out eight times: the public kept on shouting *bis! bis!* and wanted to hear the first act a second time. Thus our success went on increasing; Anton Seidl was lauded to the skies by press and public. Everyone was wondering how he could, with such a small orchestra, produce such wonderful results; (Italian orchestras consist of 100 or more performers). Seidl was in everybody's mouth; he was really the main attraction of the undertaking. If he sat in a restaurant he would find himself surrounded by the élite of the local society. Garlands of laurel leaves were innumerable. Many a man after such triumphs would have become vain and proud. Not so Seidl, who remained the same modest and retiring man he had been before, happy, and sufficiently rewarded in obtaining from his band of artists the best possible results. Illuminations and serenades were arranged for the artists. Imagine how delightful it was for us ladies to return home after a concert covered with flowers in our beautifully decorated gondolas. For me, who was a young girl, it was particularly romantic and enjoyable.

MORE HONORS FOR SEIDL

" In front of the Vendramin Palace, in which Richard Wagner closed his eyes for the last time our orchestra played the funeral march from the *Götterdämmerung*. The whole Grand Canal was covered with thousands of gondolas. On our return Anton Seidl received at the hands of beautiful women bouquets of roses, but in his profound grief at the loss of his master he hardly noticed these offerings. Numerous invitations were sent to him, and it was intimated to him that the acceptance of at least a few would be to his interest, as the people intended to bestow an order

on him; but he declined everything. He did not care for such things, and was at that time so shy that he then, as always, avoided everything in the way of ostentation—not always to his advantage.

"He always disapproved of repetitions, and more especially so in the works of his beloved master. The death march in the *Götterdämmerung*, however, and the Waldweben in *Siegfried*, he was compelled to repeat because the public refused to stop applauding. Like marble he stood there to show the public that interruptions were out of place and that the opera must not be marred in its continuity. But the public was not satisfied until these numbers were repeated. In Bologna, when the curtain had fallen on the funeral march, a big crown of silver laurel leaves was handed to him from the stage, the tribute of a number of music-lovers. We ladies received on this occasion bouquets of such dimensions that we were not able to stow them away in the carriages and could only pick out a few of the handsomest flowers, leaving the rest. And so our journey through Italy was a succession of triumphs for the music of Richard Wagner. In Bologna it was when one forenoon there was a knock at my door, and on my saying, 'Come in,' Anton Seidl stood there, visibly embarrassed, with a beautiful bouquet which he had gathered for me with his own hands. He asked me if I would consent to become his partner in life and share with him pleasure and sorrow. I do not know myself how love for him crept into my heart without my being aware of it, but I felt it was a love such as we experience but once in a lifetime. We were betrothed without informing anyone, but the fact became known a couple of weeks later in Turin, where we exchanged rings. How touching it was when, walking along the beach, he would stoop to gather some beautiful shells, or at other times to pick

flowers for me. He had never done such things before, nor did he at any former time wear a ring or a button-hole bouquet; all this was too showy for him, but he did it for me after our wedding. Jealous he was beyond the expression of words. I was so successful at that time that offers of engagements for short or long seasons fairly showered upon me in every city; poems were dedicated to me and bouquets without number sent; but the moment anyone looked at me he was in a rage. At Rome the German ambassador (I think it was Baron Keudell) gave a grand festival to which all the artists were invited; in fact, it was given in our honor. But Anton Seidl was absent. It was also in Rome that the beautiful Queen Margarita of Italy called him in presence of the whole public to confer upon him her thanks and the assurance of her profound appreciation of his merits. No one else of the company of artists was thus honored, and the circumstance awakened considerable jealousy among many of them.

MADAME DE LUCCA

"One of his greatest admirers was Madame de Lucca, a publisher of music at Milan, a lady who had frequently visited Wagner at Bayreuth, and was one of his most devoted followers. This lady travelled with us in Italy from city to city, unwilling to miss a single performance; she was very kind to me and came very near changing my whole career some years previous to the events I have just related. In 1876, when I was a pupil of Hans Richter, I had the good fortune to be able to attend all the rehearsals for the Nibelung festival in the Wagner theatre.

"One afternoon I was singing my part when someone knocked at my door, and on my opening the door two ladies and three gentlemen came in. One of the ladies was Madame de Lucca, a short stout brunette, and the other a companion of hers,

the only one in the party who spoke German. She explained to me that Madame de Lucca had heard me sing, and was delighted with my voice. She had come with a view to propose my going with her to Italy, where she would give me the most competent teachers and treat me as her own child, and that it would not cost me one penny. One of the gentlemen present, the Director of the Scala Theatre in Milan, wanted me at once to sign a contract that I would, in the following year, appear at the Scala in the parts of Elsa, Elizabeth, Senta, and Marguerite, which I was to sing in Italian, but I was not to be called upon to sing in any Italian operas. And this magnificent offer I declined on the advice of Hans Richter, who wished to preserve me for the German stage. Had I accepted, I am sure I should have had a splendid future before me.

"When at Venice, in the Théâtre Fenice, after the curtain fell on the first act of *Die Walküre*, a lady came and embraced and kissed me heartily; that was Madame de Lucca, who visited me often and would sit for hours at my side, although we could not speak to one another. She also sent me the most beautiful flowers. She asked me once to urge Mr. Seidl to accept at least one invitation, in the course of which he was to be decorated with an order, but I could not prevail upon him to go.

MARRIAGE

"After the Wagner Theatre had completed its long series of performances, Anton Seidl accepted an engagement under Angelo Neumann, at Bremen, whither I went to join him as his wife on the 29th of February, 1884. We were married in the Cathedral at Frankfort, where I had an engagement. The fact of our getting married on the 29th of February, and a Friday, caused considerable comment amongst our friends and acquaint-

ances, but for me this Friday proved a day of good luck, and, even if I had been superstitious on the subject, I could not have changed the date, as I would otherwise have been compelled to stay three years longer at Frankfort.

" Anton Seidl did not arrive at Frankfort till the day preceding our wedding. The ladies of the house where I lived asked him if he had ordered the wedding bouquet. Of such things he naturally had not the remotest idea. Thoroughly frightened, he replied that he was absolutely ignorant, and asked what kind of flowers he was to order. The ladies laughed heartily at his discomfiture, and told him that all he had to do was to order a bridal bouquet at the florist's, and the florist would do the rest. On our arrival at Bremen we were received with the highest distinction ; our apartments looked like flower gardens ; the orchestra gave us a serenade that evening and the chorus singers another one the following morning.

A YEAR IN NEW YORK

" My husband had dreamed so often about America that an irresistible power drew him towards that country, and he felt convinced that he would find there a fine opening for his work. Here I must state that when I was a young girl, I bound myself in my contracts with Neumann to visit all countries where he should send me excepting America. I do not know whether it was the fear of the ocean or the instinctive knowledge that the climate would not agree with me, and that I should soon lose my voice ; at any rate, I had in all my contracts caused the word ' America ' to be cancelled. Then came Dr. Leopold Damrosch, who offered me an engagement for New York. I should have preferred to say ' No,' but I loved my husband so dearly that for his sake I should not only have gone to America but anywhere.



Mrs. Seidl as Eva in "Meistersinger"
1886

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FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY FALK

I should have willingly given up my life for him! My only reason for coming was to study the peculiarities of the country and see what chance my husband might have for a concert tour. At that time I felt dreadfully lonesome, and could hardly wait for the time when we should start on our return journey. My desire to leave was so intense that, when on a Friday I sang the part of Sieglinde for the last time, I immediately bought a ticket for the English steamer so as to be able to leave New York the next morning, for with my ticket from Dr. Damrosch I could not have left till the following Wednesday. By the sudden death of Dr. Damrosch everything was of course changed. Director Stanton made my husband an offer to become first conductor of the Metropolitan Opera, and in consequence he came to New York in the following autumn.

"I am still convinced that a mysterious attraction drew him to New York, for the moment he saw the harbor he was delighted; the elevated railroad he found imposing; even the large telegraph poles seemed to him beautiful. We were still in the carriage when he exclaimed: 'This is magnificent! I feel that I shall get along well here.' When he saw the big Opera House he was delighted with his future sphere of activity. He was enchanted also with the idea of being the first to introduce in New York the great works of his master—to make them acquainted with the *Meistersinger*, *Rheingold*, *Siegfried*, *Götterdämmerung* and *Tristan*."

So far Mrs. Seidl's narrative.

GOLDEN AGE OF GERMAN OPERA

The circumstances which led to the substitution of German for Italian Opera at the Metropolitan, and thus to Anton Seidl's engagement, need not be dwelt on here in detail. In brief,

Messrs. Abbey & Grau lost such an amazing sum of money—about a quarter of a million—during the first season in the New Opera House, though their company included such famous singers as Nilsson, Campanini, Scalchi, that they were unwilling to risk another season. Unwilling to close their house—which would have meant a triumph for the rival Academy of Music—the stockholders decided to assume all risks themselves and try once more. Some of the newspapers had been persistently clamoring for Wagner in the original, and for other German operas. The suggestion was accordingly made that German opera should be given a trial, as that would not conflict so directly with the Italian opera at the Academy. Dr. Leopold Damrosch was secured as conductor and sent to Germany to engage the singers. He succeeded in securing no less eminent a Wagnerian singer than Frau Materna; but, apart from that, he gave up the star-system and tried to win success by giving the German masterworks with fine ensembles and at reasonable prices of admission. The operas produced were *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, *Walküre*, *Freischütz*, *Fidelio*, *Les Huguenots*, *William Tell*, *Don Giovanni*, *Le Prophète*, *Masaniello*, *La Juive* and *Rigoletto*. I remember how anxious and nervous everybody was regarding this enterprise; letters came to me begging me to be as gentle toward it as my critical conscience would allow me to be. But the success of the first season of German opera was so great as to astonish the most sanguine. In place of the quarter of a million deficit of the previous season, the stockholder-managers had only $40,000 to pay—a mere bagatelle to them.

In the meantime Dr. Damrosch had died on the battlefield, but he died as a victorious general. It was therefore decided to continue German opera for at least one more season, and a salaried manager was chosen in the person of Edmund C. Stanton, who

went to Europe and brought back three first-class Wagner singers—Lilli Lehmann, Marianne Brandt and Emil Fischer—and, most important of all, a new conductor, Anton Seidl, whom Wagner himself had, as we have seen, during the last years of his life, favored above all other interpreters of his music, and under whose inspired guidance Wagner opera was destined to become a tidal wave that swept nearly everything else from the stage.

During the first year of German opera at the Metropolitan, Colonel Mapleson kept up his rivalry at the Academy of Music, with Patti and Nevada as his bright particular stars. But finally he was obliged to retire from the field. "I cannot fight Wall Street," he exclaimed. He might have added "and Wagner." It used to be one of Mapleson's favorite maxims that "Wagner spells ruin." He was quite right, from his point of view; for, given in his way, with colorature singers and incompetent conductors, Wagner's operas were, indeed, bound to fail. But the Wagnerites insisted that if these operas were given in New York as they were in Germany, they would succeed here, too. The performances at the Metropolitan proved this, and Mapleson was refuted and routed.

DÉBUT IN NEW YORK

Anton Seidl made his début at the Metropolitan Opera House on November 23, 1885. Interesting particulars regarding this performance will be found in Mr. Steinberg's article. It was universally conceded that, often as *Lohengrin* had been heard in New York, its poetic beauties and its thrilling climaxes had never been brought out as on this occasion. Everybody congratulated Mr. Stanton on his good luck in securing as his conductor the man of whom Wagner had said that, if Hans

Richter had fallen ill before or during the first Bayreuth festival, he would have unhesitatingly placed the performances under his guidance,* though he was then but twenty-six years old; the man of whom he wrote, not long before his death, "I rely on you above all others"; the man who had first introduced the Nibelung dramas in Berlin, and many other German cities, as well as in five European countries—England, Belgium, Italy, Hungary, Holland—and whose privilege it was now to do the same for them in America, with the exception of *Die Walküre*, which had been done before. Under his direction *Die Meistersinger* had its first American hearing on January 4, 1886; *Tristan and Isolde* on December 1, 1886; *Siegfried* on November 9, 1887; *Die Götterdämmerung* on January 25, 1888; *Rheingold*, January 4, 1889. Each of these dramas was the lion of the season in which it was produced, and each one established Mr. Seidl more firmly as a favorite of the public. As a writer in the *Sun* has remarked, "No conductor was ever so popular with a mass of people in this city as Mr. Seidl was. Whether he appeared before a large audience at the Metropolitan or at a concert of less importance he was certain to be greeted with applause. He was well known by sight to more New Yorkers than any other musician in this city, and he was recognized everywhere in public."

WAGNERIAN CONQUEST OF NEW YORK

It is true that in these great successes for his master he was assisted in turn by all the eminent singers of Germany; but in Wagner's operas the best cast is paralyzed if the conductor is second-rate; he is the pilot who leads the ship through all the difficulties, and to Mr. Seidl, therefore, is due special honor

* See the facsimile of Wagner's certificate printed in this volume.

among those who are responsible for the Wagnerian conquest of New York.

Seven years German opera held the fort, and more and more did Wagner come to the front. In the season of 1889–90, for instance, the box-office receipts for Wagnerian performances were $121,565, while those for all other performances combined were only $83,982. As a matter of fact, the public got into such a state of mind that it practically refused to attend any operas but Wagner's in paying numbers. This was almost too much of a good thing, even for the full-blooded Wagnerites, who used to be maligned as persons who wanted Wagner, the whole of Wagner and nothing but Wagner on the operatic stage, but who, in truth, were among the first to crave more variety in the repertoire. That the stockholders finally got tired of this state of affairs is not to be wondered at. Many of them did not care for German opera at all, but merely tolerated it because it seemed to pay better than anything else. But, although the advanced subscription had gradually grown from a few thousand a year to as much as $85,000, the deficit grew larger every year, for reasons unknown to the public, and finally it was decided to try a change and go back to Italian opera.

GERMAN OPERA BANISHED

This decision was arrived at in secret conclave, the directors being apparently afraid of a general outcry if they declared their intentions openly. Loud were the wails in the Wagner camp, for no one could foresee that the change would in the end only plant Wagner more firmly in New York soil, through the enthusiasm of the great singers who had been brought over for the express purpose of exterminating Wagner.

For Anton Seidl the cessation of German opera was a most

serious matter. Had it not been for the fact that he was in 1891 elected as conductor of the Philharmonic Society, in place of Mr. Theodore Thomas, who had accepted a very tempting offer to found an orchestra in Chicago, he would have been without employment or income, and would have doubtless returned to Germany. Under his conductorship the Philharmonic Society flourished immensely.

PHILHARMONIC PROSPERITY

When Mr. Theodore Thomas assumed regular control of the Philharmonic (1879–80), the first year's receipts were $18,735 —an advance of $11,578 over the preceding season, when Neuendorff conducted. Every subsequent year saw an increase until in Mr. Thomas's last year the sum of $28,246 was reached. When Mr. Thomas went to Chicago, most of his friends remained true to the Philharmonic, while the accession of Mr. Seidl's friends and the growth of the city swelled the number. After Mr. Seidl became leader, the receipts were $29,306, $32,574, $30,111, $32,681, $34,839, $34,324. In consequence of this growing prosperity, the directors decided, in 1897, to add two extra concerts. They did so with considerable misgiving, fearing that not a few subscribers might desert them. But the contrary proved to be true. Whereas the concerts were increased 33 per cent., the subscriptions increased 60 per cent., and the receipts for the season's sixteen concerts amounted to almost $50,000.

Of Mr. Seidl's admirable work as conductor of this society I shall speak in another chapter of this volume. The steadily growing popularity of its concerts under his bâton shows what the most highly educated music-lovers of New York thought of him in a capacity so different from his operatic sphere. Professor Edward A. MacDowell once remarked that there was probably no



Anton Seidl

1888

serious matter. Had it not been for the fact that he was in 1891 elected as conductor of the Philharmonic Society, in place of Mr. Theodore Thomas, who had accepted a very tempting offer to found an orchestra in Chicago, he would have been without employment or income, and would have doubtless returned to Germany. Under his conductorship the Philharmonic Society flourished immensely.

PHILHARMONIC PROSPERITY

When Mr. Theodore Thomas assumed regular control of the Philharmonic (1879–80), the first year's receipts were $18,735—an advance of $11,578 over the preceding season, when Neuendorff conducted. Every subsequent year saw an increase until in Mr. Thomas's last year the sum of $28,246 was reached. When Mr. Thomas went to Chicago, most of his friends remained true to the Philharmonic, while the accession of Mr. Seidl's friends and the growth of the city swelled the number. After Mr. Seidl became leader, the receipts were $29,306, $32,574, $30,111, $32,681, $34,839, $34,324. In consequence of this growing prosperity, the directors decided, in 1897, to add two extra concerts. They did so with considerable misgiving, fearing that not a few subscribers might desert them. But the contrary proved to be true. Whereas the concerts were increased 33 per cent., the subscriptions increased 60 per cent., and the receipts for the season's sixteen concerts amounted to almost $50,000.

Of Mr. Seidl's admirable work as conductor of this society I shall speak in another chapter of this volume. The steadily growing popularity of its concerts under his bâton shows what the most highly educated music-lovers of New York thought of him in a capacity so different from the operatic sphere. Professor Edward A. MacDowell once remarked that there was probably no



FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY WILHELM

other contemporary musician so great both as operatic and concert conductor. And it is to be noted specially that Anton Seidl won this preëminence and popularity in the concert hall through his interpretations of other masters than his own ; for of Wagner's works, only two or three were played by the Philharmonic each season. Every conductor has his prejudices and his special excellences, and no musician has ever interpreted all composers equally well. Anton Seidl had his weak points and his careless days, but I can say from an experience which includes nearly all the great conductors of the last twenty-five years, that I have never known one so many-sided as he was.

Besides the Philharmonic he also conducted for a number of years a series of concerts under the auspices of the Seidl Society. These were given in Brooklyn in winter and at Brighton Beach in summer. Sometimes he visited other cities with his Metropolitan Orchestra, and also gave extra series in New York, at the Lenox Lyceum and elsewhere. Though his orchestra was not large, and though he seldom had money enough to get all the rehearsals he wanted, he achieved remarkable results. Some of the most delightful concerts I have ever heard were those given on Sunday nights at the Lenox Lyceum. It was often remarked in those days that Mr. Seidl could achieve finer results with forty players than most conductors with eighty.

There were many difficulties and rivalries against which Anton Seidl had to contend in the years when he had to depend on concerts for his living. He was also obliged to witness two seasons of special Wagner performances in which he, the greatest interpreter of these operas, could not have participated except in a way not consonant with his dignity and his artistic conscience. Moreover, for two or three years New York witnessed the strange spectacle of having Wagner's operas conducted at the Metropolitan by an

Italian, while Wagner's favorite conductor was engaged to preside over the Sunday popular concerts! He was a very unhappy man in those years; he gave way to fits of despondency that helped to undermine his health. I do not hesitate to say that had it not been for those years of neglect, when everything seemed to conspire against him, he would be alive and well to-day. It is sad to think that the victims of circumstances are usually the world's best men.

REINSTATED AT THE METROPOLITAN

Before this tragic end came, however, Anton Seidl's life once more illustrated the law of the survival of the fittest. Help came from two directions. The admirers of the great conductor, feeling that things had gone too far, got up a monster petition with several thousand signatures begging that Anton Seidl be restored to the conductorship of the Metropolitan for at least the Wagner operas. In the mean time another force was at work that in the end would have brought about the same result unaided. When German opera was displaced by Italian, M. Jean de Reszke was imported with others, as an antidote to Wagner. He had up to that time appeared in only one Wagner opera, *Lohengrin*. Wonderful artist as he was, he gradually saw what new worlds there were for him to conquer, and having heard Mr. Seidl conduct some of the other operas on special occasions, he made up his mind that he would devote himself to the Wagner operas and music drama thereafter, and that Anton Seidl must conduct them. The will of the greatest of tenors is law. I know that on one occasion M. Jean de Reszke made Mr. Grau and Mr. Seidl sign a contract in his own room, so that no accident might frustrate his wishes.

Future generations will read with amazement that New York

listened for years to second- and third-rate performances of Wagner's great works while Anton Seidl was looking on idle, neglected and despondent. A short extract from one of my criticisms in the *Evening Post* will show what a peculiar state of affairs prevailed even after Mr. Seidl was re-engaged for some of the operas:

"Last night, for the first time this season, Mr. Grau applied to a Wagner opera the same principle that he applies to all the other operas on the regular nights—that of putting the best person in his special place. *Lohengrin* was given under the direction of Mr. Anton Seidl, and the success, both financial and artistic, was so overwhelming that it will be very strange indeed if Wagner ever fails in future seasons to have the same justice meted out to him as is given to Verdi, Gounod and Bizet. Three days ago seats for most parts of the house were not to be had for love or money, and the auditorium last evening was simply packed up to the ceiling. It was a refined audience, too; there were only two large hats in the whole parquet, conversation was hushed, untimely applause hissed down; but when the proper time for applause came, it was given with a sincerity and enthusiasm not witnessed at any other performance this year.

"It was another object lesson as regards the truth of the maxim we have repeatedly preached—that unless the conductor is first-class the singers cannot do themselves justice and fail to get the applause due them. The cast of *Lohengrin* was excellent, but no better than that of *Die Meistersinger;* the difference in the reception of these works was that one was given, apathetically, by a conductor who did not reveal half the beauties of the score, whereas *Lohengrin* was in the hands of Mr. Seidl, who infused into it all the energy and dramatic fire of his Hungarian spirit. Other conductors on Wagnerian evenings are

usually received in chilling silence, while he, last evening, was at his first appearance received with applause so prolonged that he had to get up and bow three times; and after the second act he had to come out again and again with the singers. 'One must be blind and deaf,' wrote M. Jean de Reske to a friend last year, 'not to perceive how the New York public adores Mr. Seidl.' Blind and deaf, indeed; yet it requires constant fighting against hostile influences to keep him in his proper place. It is a most extraordinary state of affairs."

BELOVED BY HIS SINGERS

M. Jean de Reske's enthusiasm for Mr. Seidl was shared by all the other artists, some of whom have written for this volume their appreciations of his genius. Several of the greatest singers of the century have told me that they sometimes almost forgot to continue their parts, so utterly absorbed and fascinated were they by the pathos and emotional fervor of his orchestral eloquence. Albert Niemann, the greatest Wagnerian tenor of his day, once said to me as we were walking down Broadway:

"You speak of the profound impression the third act of *Tristan* made on you; but I can hardly believe that it stirs you quite as profoundly as it does me. Strong man as I am, I am not ashamed to confess that on several occasions in this act my singing has been marred by sobs and tears which I could not suppress.

"There is nothing grander in Shakspere, in Æschylus, than the third act of *Tristan*. But it is a tremendous task to sing it—an enormous burden on the memory. I have sung *Tristan* about forty times, yet this very morning Seidl and I studied the score together. I cannot tell you how disappointed I am that Seidl did not accept the offer of the conductorship of the Berlin

Opera. *Half the labor and responsibility of singing is taken from our shoulders by such a leader.* To give an illustration, this evening, for a second only, I was at a loss for my next words. Seidl felt it; I looked at him, read the words on his lips, and everything went along smoothly."

The late Max Alvary often spoke to me in the same strain, endorsing the sentiment I have just italicized. He deplored—nay, actually apologized for—the necessity he was placed under of singing in this country under another conductor when Anton Seidl was present and unemployed. One day he thus vividly illustrated the difference it makes to a singer whether he has a first-rate or a second- or third-rate leader: "After a certain performance," he said, "the conductor reproached me for not coming in with his first beat at a certain place. 'The first beat!' I angrily retorted. 'I am an actor—I have no time to watch your beats. I was waiting for a big wave of sound to plunge into it with my voice; but the wave did not come.' When Mr. Seidl conducts," he added to me, "these waves of sound, be they large or small, never fail to rise."

STAGE MANAGEMENT

While thus the relations between Anton Seidl and the great singers was one of genuine admiration on both sides, there was one side of the New York performances that often annoyed the great conductor. When everything else was so near perfection, it distressed him to see things so bungled on the stage owing to incompetent or careless stage management. It will be remembered that the department in which Wagner took special care to instruct Anton Seidl was the correspondence of the various things that happen on the stage with the music which illustrates them. I have before me a letter which Seidl wrote to Wagner, but never finished

or forwarded, which illustrates the amazing minuteness with which he attended to every detail. I should like to insert this letter here were it not that it includes some rather pointed remarks about persons still living. It was written in Vienna, where Wagner had sent him, in 1878, to serve as "correpetitor," and gives an amusing account of the stupid cuts that had been made; the "beautiful" dragon which was to be so great an improvement on Bayreuth, but would not work until it was altered in accordance with Wagner's directions; and the troubles with the singers. Director Jauner, who, when he first saw the dragon, said to Seidl triumphantly, "Na, ist der nicht scheener als der in Bayreuth?" was obliged to confess at last that a "beautiful" dragon was not exactly what was wanted, and he confessed that "zu allerletzt hat Wagner doch immer recht" (after all, in the end, Wagner is always right).

Had the managers of the Metropolitan Opera House heeded the wish Wagner expressed to Angelo Neumann, that "he should be allowed, even in matters of stage management, more authority than is usually given to conductors," the New York performances would not have been inferior in any respect to those at Bayreuth. Yet, notwithstanding that shortcoming, these performances set up a standard, not only for Europe, but for all the world. Mr. Otto Floersheim, who was one of the very first to champion the cause of Wagner in America (beginning as early as 1875), and who, during the last ten years, as representative in Germany of the *Musical Courier*, has had exceptional opportunities for hearing all the great conductors frequently, writes to me as follows:

"Seidl was to me a revelation, for he was the first one to demonstrate that a Beethoven, or any other symphony, could be interpreted in a modern spirit. He was to me the impersona-

tion of the principle of progress in music, progress in reproduction as well as production. His interpretation of the Nibelungen, *Meistersinger* and *Tristan* remain to me the models and the standards of comparison by which I gauge all other reproductions of the same works I hear in Berlin, or in any other city, and I can assure you that they are still unequalled and surely have not been surpassed, although I witnessed performances under Richter, Weingartner, Muck, Mottl, Schuch and many others. Also *Parsifal*, Wagner's swan song, I have not heard performed at Bayreuth more nobly, elevatingly and suggestively than under Anton Seidl's bâton last summer."

SOME PERSONAL TRAITS

Before proceeding to the last year of Anton Seidl's life, let us linger for a while on his characteristics as a man, to enable the reader to realize that by his death the world lost not only a great musician, but a noble man in the highest sense of the word—a man to whom art was sacred, whose pride never degenerated into vanity, and who performed a number of self-sacrificing actions which the world knew nothing of. He was every inch an artist, never satisfied with mere financial success, if he felt that his ideals had not been approximated. Though the most generous of men—he has been known on various occasions to return his check to managers who had suffered losses—he would not even conduct a charity concert unless it could be done in a way that would not discredit the work or deceive the public. Another of his traits—remarkable among musicians—was his modesty. He knew perfectly well what he could do, but he never acted in a way to show that he was conscious of it. During the years of his eclipse he never complained, except to his friends. He was, indeed, too modest; he lacked the quality of

"push," so necessary in this country; and but for the zeal of his admirers he might have been kept in the background till the day of his death. Others intrigued against him, but he never stooped to intrigue against a rival. Quite as remarkable as his artistic honesty and his modesty was his enthusiasm. If his friends were zealous in his behalf, it was because he had inspired them with the contagion of his enthusiasm for art. He took an entirely impersonal view of such matters, and was consequently often misunderstood by persons who can comprehend actions and sacrifices only when made on personal grounds. Of his devotion to his work Mrs. Seidl has some interesting things to tell us:

"It is impossible to imagine a man more devoted to the cause of music than Anton Seidl was when he had in view the production of some important work; he thought of absolutely nothing else. I could not coax him away from his work long enough to take a cup of tea. On an empty stomach he would attend his rehearsals, and would come home (I am now speaking principally of the German operas) so thoroughly exhausted that he was unable to partake of any food, and it would be five o'clock before he would touch anything, having thus gone for more than twenty-four hours without food. Only at rare intervals could I prevail upon him to eat a sandwich. So thoroughly impressed was he with the importance of the work before him. And how hard he worked! Before his illness he did not know what it was to be tired, and when he was tired he knew no rest. There were days when he passed fully nine hours standing in front of the director's desk. And what exhausting journeys he undertook in this country! Once while on a concert trip he had to cross the Hudson at Poughkeepsie on a sleigh and the ice was so thin that he was in momentary danger of death; fortu-

nately I knew nothing about it, otherwise I should have gone crazy. How despondent he was at times when returning home from a rehearsal! 'I dread to-morrow's performance,' he would say; 'I need more rehearsals absolutely: if I could have but one more all might be well.' Then he would get so excited that he could not sleep a wink all night.

"On the day set for a performance he would remain perfectly quiet, hardly speaking a word. No one not acquainted with him would have thought he was nervous, yet how excited he was, to the very tips of his fingers, we knew very well! The slightest touch startled him. I knew this and avoided everything that might disturb him. How different he was when sitting at his desk! Then all anxiety disappeared. Was it not his task to animate his orchestra to do their very best? Then he was like a general; not the slightest happening on the stage escaped his notice, and he understood, better than any other musical director, how to turn to account the various incidents of the stage. Once at a ballet rehearsal in the third act of the *Meistersinger*, the ballet-master knew absolutely nothing as to the kind of dancing that would be proper for the occasion; the couples simply jumped aimlessly about the stage, when suddenly my husband seized one of the girls around the waist and began dancing, and it proved to be the correct way, although he never in his life had danced before. Director Stanton, who sat by my right on the stage, was astounded, and remarked to me: 'That man knows everything!'

"If anyone complimented him after the first or second act of an opera, he would be displeased and would say, 'There are still two acts before us. God knows what may happen before we get through!' If everything went well to the end he was delighted, and it was a pleasure to see with what evident content-

ment he would light a cigar and smoke it. Smoking was his great passion, and he never felt really comfortable unless he was holding a cigar in his mouth. He would then sit up with me at home till two o'clock A. M., or even later, describing the whole opera, and his excitement was so great that sleep would not have come to him, anyway, at an earlier hour.

"How happy he felt when the critics and the public treated him with consideration, and how modest he remained with all his splendid successes! This was shown especially when he was honored with a gift of flowers; my heart fairly beat for fear the givers might be offended at his apparent unconcern on receiving the flowers. How often I begged him to show at least a pleasant countenance! He promised to do so, but the effort proved too great for him, as it was very painful for him to become the focus of the public gaze. His modesty did not admit of his displaying any pleasure, although at heart he felt very happy."

HOME LIFE

For a number of years Mr. and Mrs. Seidl, who had no children, lived at 38 East 62nd Street, New York, and for the few weeks that the conductor could spare from his concert trips and Brighton Beach engagement, he had a cottage at Fleischmann's in the Catskills. His music room in New York had a grand piano on which usually lay, or stood, some score he happened to be studying. The walls were adorned with rare portraits of Wagner, as well as of Bach, Beethoven and Bismarck. Bouquets and wreaths were scattered about, as is usual in the rooms of prominent stage artists. One could not be in the house long without seeing or hearing either Wotan or Mime, two of the eight dogs that were allowed the freedom of the house. Anton Seidl was as great a lover of dogs as Wagner; there

was never a time when he did not have at least one pet. At Leipsic, in 1870, he had a very intelligent white poodle of unusual size. His name was Caro and he used to carry notes between Mr. Schueler and his master. The note was fastened to his collar, and then Mr. Seidl gave a peculiar whistle, whereupon the dog, barking violently, ran to Mr. Schueler's quarters half a mile away.

"The outside door of the flat in which I lived," writes Mr. Schueler, "had an old-fashioned door bell, a wire with an iron ring attached about four feet from the floor. This bell Caro would ring, and after being let in, would run to the door of my room scratching and barking until I opened the door. It was too funny to see him hold his head sideways until I took the note from his collar. After writing and securing the answer under the collar, the dog would run home to his master. Caro would never allow anybody else but his master to play on the piano in Seidl's room. If anyone persisted in playing, Caro barked till he stopped. The tricks Caro performed were without number: playing on the piano himself, singing soprano or bass, carrying shoes, gloves or any article in the room, walking or dancing on his hind legs, smoking and playing sentinel, holding a cane between the front paws, were some of his many accomplishments."

EIGHT PET DOGS

Mrs. Seidl's manuscript contains the following details regarding the dogs they had in New York, and whom they always took to the Catskills in summer:

"Whenever our dear Tony came home from his engagement at Brighton Beach or some exhausting concert trip to rest awhile in our beautiful home in the Catskill Mountains, every-

thing was bedecked with flowers and leaves, and the columns of our cottage ornamented with garlands and ribbons, so as to render our home worthy of its owner. All his dogs, seven dachshunds and one St. Bernard, stood on the piazza awaiting the arrival of the train that was to bring their master home. As soon as he stepped off the car, the intelligent animals would rush off to greet their master in their own boisterous way, raising a cloud of dust in which both master and dogs disappeared, until finally, their first burst of glee having subsided, they would rush up the hill and settle down on the piazza, where a bountiful feast of crackers awaited them as a reward for their good behavior. Often my dear husband would walk up the mountainside during the greatest heat of the summer rather than take a conveyance, just to afford his favorites an opportunity to show their affection for their master; then there was such a noise and glee that I often wondered how my husband's musically-trained ears could bear the ordeal. Once he took a trip in the middle of May to Fleischmann's, accompanied by his favorite dog Wotan, and as it was still quite cold, he took off his overcoat and spread it on the floor in the baggage car to keep the dog warm, and he himself remained in the baggage car to keep him from feeling lonesome or being subjected to ill-treatment by the trainmen.

IN THE CATSKILLS — WORK AND PLAY

"In the early morning at seven o'clock I was in the habit of going to my garden, my dear Tony being still fast asleep and resting peacefully from his very exhausting labor. Of course everything was kept quiet so that his slumber might not be disturbed. Suddenly the loud barking of the dogs called my attention from my work and looking up I saw my dear Tony looking out of the window, happy and as full of mischief as a

school-boy, and giving me a wistful glance which meant that he wanted me to get his breakfast ready. Dignified as he was in his ordinary intercourse with the world, he gladly submitted to being spoiled by his wife when at home. I had to prepare everything with my own hands as if he were a child. His breakfast consisted usually of a cup of coffee, bread and butter and fruit; he shared it with his dogs, and then went to the depot to get his letters and newspapers, and to chat a few moments with friends he met. Then he went to Fleischmann's Mountain to play a few games of billiards and then came home for lunch.

"The afternoons were generally devoted to work, but if he had a concert in view he would sit down from early morning at his work-table, from which I could hardly coax him to take a mouthful to eat. What pleasure it afforded him to work at his own home! His studio was so quiet! From his writing-desk he could see the beautiful trees, hear the song of the birds, for whose benefit he had ordered the construction of little houses to be used as nests. How he enjoyed the delightfully fresh air and the delicious quiet! He was a completely changed man up in the mountains, and after a fortnight's rest he was ready for work again. What a fast worker he was! Whatever came into his mind he wrote down immediately without any mistakes and in beautiful handwriting. I never saw him writing the same thing twice. I never could understand how it was possible for him to retain in his memory note for note of his new scorings. What he could but seldom be induced to do in the city he did with pleasure in the country. He would sit down and play wonderfully well, sometimes his own spontaneous inspirations which, in spite of my frequent requests, he would refuse to put on paper. Whatever composition emanated from his pen was absolutely his own and bore the stamp of his charac-

ter and individuality; there was no borrowing from his own beloved masters, and he never took notes. I promised him to study stenography, so that I might preserve at least some of his compositions, for he had seriously intended after the London season to compose an opera, having received from a very talented poet (Francis Neilson) a libretto which quite inspired my dear husband. As he never played his own compositions in the presence of anyone else but myself, many a reader may be inclined to doubt the truth of my assertion when I, his wife, say that it is a pity he was so unwilling to let others hear them, for eminent as he was as an interpreter, I am certain that he might have been equally eminent as a composer. Endowed as he was with the fire of genius, profound feeling, and a high capacity for dramatic expression, which enabled him to inspire not only his numerous artists but also the general public when he was interpreting the masterpieces of Wagner, Beethoven, Liszt and others, I am thoroughly convinced that as a composer he could have created works of a high order.

" My dear husband loved nature, took pleasure in forests, trees and flowers, although he knew nothing about taking care of them; he did not even know the names of the trees and plants. One day he brought home a blue-bell which he had torn out by the root near the sidewalk; another time he brought a tiny maple tree, which he had torn up by the root, and declared his intention of planting with his own hands. 'Well,' I told him, 'if this little tree with its torn roots grows, then the age of wonders has not yet gone by.' And it did grow, and is the only tree Anton Seidl ever planted. In various parts of our garden he put tables and iron benches, which he proceeded to paint so well that no professional painter could have done it any better. He also painted my flower boxes and the wood-

house, and one would have thought he had never done anything else in his life but paint. One day he went into the woods to repair a foot-path which had gone to ruin. He toiled like a common laborer who is working for wages, by the sweat of his brow, and when I told him that this unaccustomed hard work would result in a stiff back he only smiled; but three days later he was laid up and could hardly move.

MIME BURIED ALIVE

"One day one of our dogs, who had been lying on the green sward behind the house after dinner, suddenly disappeared. My dear husband, Bertha, our faithful housekeeper, and others searched for him—it was our favorite Mime—but in vain. We understood perfectly well that the dog, being passionately fond of hunting, was probably in the hole of some woodchuck and could not find his way out again, which meant that he would die from hunger and thirst; or he might have been killed by a woodchuck. It was my husband's christening day, which we always celebrated with a great feast; this time he would not allow us to celebrate, and he actually shed tears, so much did he take the loss of his favorite to heart. At last, after an absence of seventy-two hours, our Mime was found buried in the hole of a woodchuck, and my dear Tony triumphantly carried him home in his arms.

"Mime was, as I have said, very much addicted to the chase, and availed himself of every opportunity for running away; and he was so sly that no matter how closely we might watch him, he always managed to escape. Of course we had to let him out once in a while, and then he would romp with the other dogs in the fresh-cut grass of the lawn. Then he would lie down to rest. After a while he would get up and lie down a little nearer

to the gate, and then, when he thought we did not pay any attention to him, off he was like a flash, and knew quite well that as soon as he reached the high grass he would be invisible to us. Then he disappeared in the woods. In the parlor he had two low stools with cushions for a bed, and woe to the intruder who presumed to take possession of it; he would push him off immediately. He was also very musical; if anyone played or sang for my husband, Mime was always present and remained perfectly quiet, unless he heard discordant notes, especially false violin notes! Then he was beside himself and moaned so pitifully that he had to be taken from the room, to the great enjoyment of my dear Tony. Mime was a very bright animal; he understood every word we addressed to him, and knew every trick that high-grade dogs are taught, such as walking through the room on his hind legs, begging, speaking and kissing the hand, but the funniest of his tricks was knocking off the ashes from my husband's cigar with his crooked paw. He also had his sympathies and antipathies for the human race. My dear husband had an occasional visit from the messenger of the orchestra; Mime was wrapped up in warm covers, and we thought he could not hear the ringing of the doorbell, but the moment this young man rang the bell, Mime would grow furious, whereas if others rang, he would not pay the slightest attention.

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

" Christmas was always an enjoyable festival with us, whether at home or on a journey. We always had a beautiful Christmas tree and had about twenty-six guests, on whom I bestowed the handsomest presents. As we had no children of our own, we delighted in inviting poor children, whose happy faces afforded

us the greatest pleasure. My dear husband was ever anxious to prepare pleasant surprises, and nothing was too good for me or others. I was always deeply touched on finding invariably among the many costly presents he made me, two hats, for the choosing of them was, as I well knew, no trifling affair for him. He always went to the same milliner, cast his eyes over the hats and pointed his fingers at the ones he wanted, without saying a word. Before he decided on his choice, the girl behind the counter tried on the hats, so he could see what impression they made, and I must say that usually these hats were more becoming to me than those I bought for myself. Naturally his appearance at the milliner's always attracted attention, and this was an ordeal to him.

"After the guests had received their presents the dogs got theirs, either a couple of chops or sausages for each one of them having been tied to the Christmas tree. They had learned from year to year what would occur. Mime used to walk around the tree wagging his tail and raising his nose, wistfully, until he had found what he was looking for; then he would bark and perform all sorts of tricks until the desired delicacy was handed to him; nor was Wotan backward in claiming his share. Those two animals had so much intelligence, and were so wise, that we could keep up a conversation with them, they evidently understanding every word we said. My husband was very fond of taking his breakfast in bed and of reading his newspapers—he took more interest in his newspapers than in his breakfast—and so it happened, usually, that his coffee or tea grew cold and Wotan had to wait for his share. When Wotan thought that he had waited quite long enough, and all his tricks and begging had gone for naught, he would put one of his forepaws on the bed, and with the other he would strike the

newspaper out of his master's hand, repeating this operation until my husband laid by the paper and gave him his share of the breakfast. At the dinner-table Mime would sit on one side of my husband and Wotan on the other. We had a great deal of fun with Mime. Both dogs slept in the same room with us, Mime in a basket lined with blankets, and Wotan on blankets spread on the carpeted floor. Both dogs waited for their master to come home. Mime knew exactly when he was due. Many carriages would pass through our street without attracting their attention, but before my husband's carriage came to a full stop before the door, Mime was already there. When my husband came home immediately after a concert, his reception by Mime was always a stormy one; also when he came home at one A. M., but if he came later the reception by Mime would be notably cooler. If it got to be as late as two o'clock A. M., Mime treated his master with silent contempt as we would laughingly remark; and even the gift of crackers, which Mime was very fond of, was then declined. In fact, he would not look at the late-comer at all.

WOTAN KILLS MIME

"If Tik, Tak, Tek, Froh, Freia and Erda, our other six dachshunds, made too much noise in the basement, all my husband had to do was to talk through the speaking-tube and everything was silent in an instant. I am sorry to say that Mime and Wotan disliked one another very much. Jealousy was the cause, and we had to be very particular not to caress one without caressing the other. Mime was more jealous than Wotan. Whenever Wotan passed by Mime growled and tried to bite his feet. This disposition was, no doubt, the cause of Mime's tragic end. He was bitten by Wotan and so badly hurt that he died within

a few hours. I was in my bedroom with my dear Tony, Wotan in the front room, when we heard Wotan bark in a peculiar manner. I went into the room and found Wotan standing over Mime; I tore Wotan away, but it was already too late, for he had bitten Mime's throat through. We were of opinion that Mime must have snapped at Wotan, and the bigger dog retaliated by killing him. My husband was so much shocked by this foul deed that he wanted to have Wotan killed forthwith, but I dissuaded him from so doing, for I knew how dear was Wotan to his heart, and that as soon as he recovered from Mime's loss he would thank me for not having consented to Wotan's death. Wotan was his pet; Mime was mine. As a punishment Wotan was banished from our room to the top floor, where for several days he refused all food, and stood there with drooping ears (I forgot mentioning that my husband had given him a severe beating), and behaved in such a queer manner that we were afraid he might lose his reason. So our friends advised us to resume our cordial relations with him, and once in a while to take him into our bedroom, otherwise the animal would surely go mad. This we did, but never failed to reproach him his infamous deed, and he evidently felt very repentant. Often we caught him smelling the spot on the floor where he had killed Mime, and following the scent to the wash table whither we had carried the poor bleeding pet. Poor Mime was forthwith taken to Fleischmann's by our dear, faithful, and devoted friend, Bertha Seifert, and there buried in our family plot.

"Is it not curious that my dear husband—when in the spring of '97 I planted several trees in our garden—should have insisted on my planting a weeping willow near our well? I felt quite down-hearted at the idea, and tried to dissuade him, as these willows are generally supposed to be fit only for church yards

and not for flower gardens. But he insisted, and I had to do his bidding. He said these gentle drooping twigs had a peculiar charm for him, and he did not attach any superstitious meaning to them. Thus I have continually before my eyes the weeping willows which, when first planted, caused me to have such a terrible foreboding.

SEIDL'S GENEROSITY

"I feel impelled to say a few words about my husband's kindness of heart. For suffering humanity his hand and heart were always open; he never could send the poor from his door unassisted. What he thus gave away would, in the aggregate, amount to a very large sum, which, for his income, was far beyond his means. And so it was with his clothes, which I had frequently to give away to strangers when he could have quite well worn them himself a while longer; but he could not refuse the clothes to a poor man who said that, but for the want of decent clothes, he might get a good position. I was sometimes compelled, when all the half-used clothes had been disposed of, to give away even the new ones. He proved his kindness of heart, when the times were bad, by taking the orchestra for several weeks on journeys without any remuneration for himself, even paying the hotel bills out of his own pocket, his sole purpose being to give his orchestra a chance to earn a little money. And how often he gave concerts for objects of public charity is well known.

MASQUERADES AND A SURPRISE

"That, in spite of his serious turn of mind, he could enjoy a good joke the following story will prove: Some time ago the Fleischmanns gave a costume ball in the Catskills; the types of every land were to be seen; a booth had been erected where

different things were presented. My dear Tony was there, too, dressed as a little maiden in short clothes and apron, with his arms and neck bare, his hair in curls, a straw hat ornamented with rose-colored ribbons and May flowers on his head, a golden medal around his neck, and low-cut shoes. He sang the birthday song of Hans Sachs. He was absolutely unrecognizable and everybody was inquiring, 'Who is that? Who can it be?' And it was quite a long while before, to everyone's delight, his identity was revealed. He looked so funny! His sunburned face, neck and hands formed such a striking contrast with his white arms and shoulders, and produced a curious effect.

"Once, on his return from a season at Brighton Beach, the families Fleischmann, Blayer, Edelheim and others surprised him by the production of a Haydn child symphony in which all the children of the above-named families as well as some grown people took part. Of course I was initiated into the secret, but was supposed to know nothing about it. I was told that it was to be a surprise party and I need not bother myself about anything. Naturally, I was anxious to do something to promote the general happiness, and so I ordered a fine supply of fruit from New York, also two musicians, so that the children might have a dance later on. I also left an order for various pieces of pastry to be prepared at home. My dear husband, who ordinarily took very little interest in cooking, was in the habit, when coming home from a very exhausting season at Brighton Beach, of visiting every individual room in our very pretty house, his heart full of happiness; even the kitchen did not escape an inspection, and so we did not know how to hide the things from him. On the festival day we were invited to dinner at a friend's house, but I went there with my husband as early as 4 P. M., so that during our absence the festive preparations might be made at our home.

Just as we were going down-stairs, a train from New York was coming in; he insisted on awaiting its arrival, and in my despair I ran up to a friend of his and said: 'Please help me get my husband away from the station, for the musicians I ordered are on this train, and if he sees them, "the cat is out of the bag."' Fortunately we succeeded in getting him away from the station just as the train was coming in. Another friend undertook to take the musicians where they were wanted. All this he failed to see, and his friends who 'happened' to drop in all followed us to Stiassny's, where we had been invited to dine. All he asked me was what business our laboring man 'Ed' had at the depot with Mime. I made him believe that I had sent Ed for some things I expected. As a matter of fact, I was expecting the things I had ordered for the evening. At Stiassny's the task was to get him into the house, under all sorts of pretexts, but he insisted on staying on the piazza. Had we left him there he would have noticed the arrival of every delivery wagon that came up our hill. So we were kept continually busy until we sat down to dinner. It was understood that, as soon as everything was ready, Fleischmann should send a messenger and advise us that all invited guests were in the house, pretending that there were visitors at our house waiting to see us.

"At last the servant came and requested Mr. and Mrs. Seidl to come home, as there were visitors to see them. I made believe inviting the family to come over to our house and to bring the children along. It was a hard task for me to conceal my happiness at the idea that we had succeeded so well in deceiving my husband, and I left him under pretence of advising Mrs. Stiassny to dress her children more warmly, and went to the piazza with her. There I observed, to my horror, that two delivery wagons with burning lanterns were coming up our hill. Now what

was I to do? To tarry any longer was impossible, for my dear husband would have suspected something, but he could not leave the house while the wagons were at our door. Nothing remained for me but to pretend that I felt suddenly ill and to declare to my husband that it was impossible for me to go home before I felt better; but I left the room as quick as possible, as it would have been impossible for me to play this part for any length of time before my husband. At last the wagons were gone; I felt well again, and we all went up our hill together. Nothing stirred in the house; the outside was quite dark, as usual when we were out; my dear Tony observed that our visitors were probably on the other side of the house in the dining-room. So he unsuspectingly opened the parlor door, but immediately, pale with emotion, he stood still, for the moment he opened the door the symphony began. The surprise was absolute, for he had not had the slightest inkling of the matter. It may be truly said that the picture of so many beautiful young faces, all intent upon performing the task that had been allotted to them, to the best of their ability, was indeed inspiring! My Tony was deeply touched and delighted at this reception his friends, big and little, had prepared for him. The little ones were especially fond of him, as this serious man, from whom nothing but performances of grand compositions were expected, had often played waltzes and other pieces for them so they could dance. The merry company stayed with us till late at night, and my husband was the happiest of all.

PRESENTS FOR HIS WIFE

"He was particularly fond of bright, lively colors, also new stuffs. If, for instance, I bought him new cravats, he would wear them every day until they were old, then he would resume

wearing his old ones again. He was quite fond of laying wagers with me, for as a rule he won; but if it should so happen that I won, he would twist things around in such a way that I finally lost all my reckoning, and it was delightful to see how much pleasure this afforded him; and as a consequence I did my best to let him win. Inexpressibly good he was. I did not venture to say I liked this or that, for he would at once insist on buying it for me. When Christmas was at hand I had to make him promise me weeks before that he would not make me any costly presents, for I had everything, and required nothing; otherwise he would have spent all his money on jewelry and other expensive things just to please me. Many a time did I tell him: 'Just give me a little bouquet and it will have for me the same value and will afford me as much pleasure as the most costly present would, for in giving it to me you have thought of me.' When he returned from Europe, very happy over his triumphs at Bayreuth and London, he brought me from the latter city a brooch which had been made for me under his special instructions. It represents the Nibelung's ring and Siegfried's horn with small rubies, which were his favorite stones. Whenever he returned from a journey he brought presents for the servants."

RELATIONS WITH MUSICIANS

In some notes contributed for this book by Mr. and Mrs. Kaltenborn, the statement is made that while Mr. Seidl himself was extremely generous, and often gave his services free at charity concerts, he insisted that the orchestral musicians "must be paid for their work." Mr. Kaltenborn was one of the leading violinists in the Seidl Orchestra, and his first experience as a soloist was somewhat trying. Mr. Seidl had never heard him play, and there had been no opportunity for a rehearsal—it was at Coney



Anton Seidl

1894

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Anton Seidl
1898



FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY FALK

Island—so that the violinist naturally felt very nervous. Afterwards, on the hotel piazza, Mr. Seidl complimented him on his achievement, adding, with a smile, " But why were you so nervous ? " Mrs. Kaltenborn answered for her husband : " Because he was afraid of you ! " " Oh," retorted the conductor, " they all say that, but I do nothing ; I only look "; and as he said that, the characteristic expression that made his face so fascinating played around his smiling mouth. He always seemed to enjoy being told that a soloist had been afraid of him—of that quiet look from over the bâton.

But the soloists loved and admired him, too, for they could be sure, in case he had had a chance for rehearsal, that they would be well accompanied. The eminent violinist, Miss Maud Powell, echoed the opinion of many players and singers when she wrote to him after a Philharmonic concert : " I want to thank you for those beautiful accompaniments, so firm yet elastic and sympathetic, full of shading and perfectly subordinated in the right places. My impulse last night was to seize your hand in gratitude in the presence of the audience ; then I suddenly thought, ' Oh, dear ; Mr. Seidl will think it American presumption or—Frechheit.' " He was also a most admirable accompanist on the piano, so remarkably sympathetic that it is a great pity he did not exhibit his talent in that line more frequently. His long experience as Wagner's secretary had taught him to play on the piano orchestral scores in a strikingly orchestral way, and at Colonel Ingersoll's house he would sometimes entertain friends by the hour playing from the *Parsifal* and other scores in a way that sounded strangely different from the usual versions of those works for the piano. It is a pity that he did not make new vocal scores of the Nibelung dramas. They are needed.

He sometimes addressed a short speech to his men explaining

the character of a new composition. I remember, especially, being told of his doing that when he conducted, for the first time in America, Wagner's juvenile symphony, the score of which he had helped to complete. He insisted that players should study their parts at home, and not leave everything to the ensemble rehearsal. If a mistake was made by the violins, for instance, he knew which one of twenty or more players was the guilty man.

"Mr. Seidl had great reverence for old age," writes Mr. Kaltenborn, "and always censured those who were disrespectful to an old man. Instances occurred at rehearsals that brought out this trait of his character strongly. At Coney Island, as elsewhere, his love of nature would show itself. Often he sat at Brighton watching the sea for hours. He was a genial companion to sympathetic friends, whom he sometimes amused by indulging in all kinds of mimicry, in which, like his dear friends, Jean and Edouard de Reske, he was an adept. Like his master, Wagner—and Beethoven—he was much given to punning, and laughed at his own efforts as cordially as anyone. He was fond of bowling and excelled in the game."

It is well known that Anton Seidl did not care for general society, though he liked to be with friends and was happy in their company, even if nothing was said.

FAVORITE HAUNTS

"He had his favorite haunts," writes Mr. Kaltenborn, "one—Fleischmann's on Broadway—where he could often be found in the afternoon, taking his coffee and smoking, and where his friends dropped in to see him. The other was the Stewart House, on Broadway and 41st Street, where my father-in-law, Mr. Borman, lived. He would go there many an evening, and always, when he went there after a concert or opera, call up

through the tube for Mr. Borman to come down, and they would sit there until early hours of the morning, talking over musical affairs or politics, of which Seidl was very fond, and on which he kept well informed. Occasionally a friend would join them, usually Albert Stettheimer or Albert Steinberg. Mr. Borman tells of how at times they would sit, or take a stroll for an hour or more, and Seidl wouldn't say a word, yet dislike to have him leave."

With the artists who sang under him Anton Seidl was always on the very best of terms. Albert Niemann, Heinrich Vogl, Max Alvary, Lilli Lehmann, Marianne Brandt, Lillian Nordica, Emma Eames, Jean and Edouard de Reszke, Plançon, Lassalle, Campanari, Fischer, and many others adored him, and the feeling was cordially reciprocated. Always serious while devoted to the task of interpreting a master work, he loved to joke at other times. In Signor Campanari's contribution to this volume the reader will find an amusing specimen of the jocular letters he sometimes sent to his friends. On several occasions dinners were given to Mr. Seidl, at which loving-cups were presented to him. When the menus were passed round for signatures he often added a line of music and a jocular verse. Nor did he in the least disapprove being made the subject of comic poems like the following, read at a dinner given by Dr. S. G. Perry to members of the Lotos Club to which Mr. Seidl belonged :

THE MASTER.

Here is to our noble Master,
 Who keeps his arm in constant motion,
And makes our hearts go slow or faster
 According as he takes a notion.

He never stops or asks to know
If we can bear such deep emotion,
But swings his bâton fast or slow,
With loyal spirit of devotion.

And we must sit and hear the strains
With heavy hearts or high elation,
While he, whate'er our joys or pains,
Goes on with his interpretation.

The doctor says it is not wise
To list to sounds that are excessive;
A man with weak heart sometimes dies
From music that is too expressive.

February 5, 1897.

HIS MAJESTY, RICHARD WAGNER

Of Mr. Seidl's stern side and his unflinching devotion to his art, an interesting instance was related some years ago by the Roman correspondent of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, when the Neumann Company gave a performance of *Die Walküre*. The King had promised to attend, and it is customary in Italian theatres, when his Majesty enters, to interrupt the performance by playing the *marcia reale*. Anton Seidl was Neumann's conductor, and he was given to understand what he must do at the moment of the King's appearance in his box. But Mr. Seidl absolutely refused to insult the majesty of King Wagner, his sovereign, by any such inartistic proceeding, and Herr Neumann, after trying in vain to make him obedient to Italian custom, was obliged to call upon the assistant conductor to preside over the opera. The performance began, and the King put in

an appearance just as Siegmund and Sieglinde were in the midst of their love duo, whereupon everyone stopped, the "royal march" was played, and then the duo was resumed.

THEODORE THOMAS

One of the pleasantest incidents to record in connection with Anton Seidl's last year is that a cordial friendship had sprung up between him and Theodore Thomas. When Mr. Seidl used the Chicago orchestra at the Auditorium performances of Wagner operas, Mr. Thomas called on him and complimented him on the masterly way in which he had secured control of a new organization. When Mr. Thomas visited New York subsequently, Mr. Seidl returned the visit, and fresh compliments were interchanged. It is needless to add that there was none of the "mutual admiration society" business in this. Both these men have been noted for their stubborn refusal to bestow praise except where they believed praise was due. To his friends Mr. Seidl spoke warmly of Mr. Thomas as a man and a musician.

It has been stated that Seidl was interested in politics, and it was therefore natural that he should want to share the privileges of citizenship in his adopted country. Accordingly, in 1891 he took out his naturalization papers, and ever after that he objected to being called Herr Seidl. "It seems like being boycotted," he said to me one day. "Why don't they say Mr. Seidl?" He insisted on having the change made on the Metropolitan Opera House programme.

Let us now resume our narrative.

Mr. Maurice Grau, who had been reinstated with his partner, Mr. Henry Abbey, at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1891, for the express purpose of driving out Wagner, came to the conclusion—after some unpleasant experiences with the

star system—that Wagner, properly sung, was after all an operatic manager's best friend, and that Mr. Seidl was Wagner's chosen interpreter. Moreover, one after another of the great singers, who had been brought over to assist Mr. Grau in his warfare upon Wagner, went over to the Wagnerian side, converted by the eloquence of Mr. Seidl's musical pleading. Once more Anton Seidl became the idol of the opera-goers, who was never allowed to take his seat at his desk before he had acknowledged three rounds of cordial applause.

TRIUMPH IN LONDON

When Mr. Grau was engaged as manager of the Covent Garden Opera in London, for the season of 1897, he took Mr. Seidl with him and gave the London opera-goers a pleasant surprise. I have before me several hundred clippings from English papers bearing witness to his triumph. The critics were not slow to discover his merits, as the following brief citations from leading newspapers show:

"Under his masterly control the subdued playing of the orchestra furnished quite a revelation."

"He secured orchestral playing of rare delicacy and beauty, and altogether proved his high reputation to be well-merited."

"Once again was a potent influence of this great conductor made manifest in the remarkably subdued and refined playing of the orchestra, which brought home to the ear all the beauties of Wagner's instrumentation, and yet never overwhelmed the voices of the singers."

"A conductor for whom Wagner has no mysteries or pitfalls."

"Mr. Seidl manipulated the forces under his control with a mastery that was truly marvelous."

"Some of the audience were astonished at that which they

imagined were certain new readings. As a matter of fact, however, they were merely a correction of mistakes in *tempi* and *nuance*, which have crept into the performance since the days that Costa, declining to correct a copyist's error, declared the discordance was the composer's intention. At any rate, Seidl, who was a pupil of Richter, and likewise studied under Wagner—in whose house he lived some years—may be accepted as an authority on the Wagnerian traditions."

"An orchestral rendering which fell little short of absolute perfection."

"Has infused a dramatic and poetic spirit into the orchestral playing as welcome as it is novel."

"Herr Seidl has raised materially the standard of performance at Covent Garden."

"He had the happy faculty—supreme in a conductor—of impressing the vocal and instrumental forces under his control with his personal ideas as to the method in which the music should be rendered."

"Anton Seidl has proved himself the best orchestral conductor we have had up to now."

"Wagner should have been present himself to hear justice done, almost for the first time, to some of his exquisite phrases. Where opera-goers have before found noise and little else, they were on Saturday able to appreciate musicianly melody and masterly scoring."

"The Covent Garden band has never played so smoothly, so softly, or with such spirit. And yet Seidl is a quiet man, with an immovable face and very little action. The way he waits for the singers must make them adore him. He dresses like an ordinary citizen, but his hair is not short. He wears pince-nez, and looks rather like Liszt in his youth."

"He is quiet in manner, without coldness at heart, and he has that power which so few conductors possess, of making the

player feel exactly what he wants. In moments of danger he displays the utmost coolness."

"The beautiful music of the opera under his direction takes on a new and overwhelming charm."

These extracts suffice to prove that the London correspondent of the New York *Sun* did not exaggerate when he cabled on June 26 regarding Anton Seidl's début:

"His triumph in London in grand opera has been greater than that of any other foreign conductor, nearly all of the critics admitting that his interpretation of Wagner has been a fresh revelation of the great composer's work, and the best ever given to the English public."

Not that this verdict was universally accepted. As every organ grinder has his monkey, every circus its clown, so every body of critics has its buffoon. The *Musical Standard* declared soberly that "one can never believe Mr. Seidl is in any sense a great Wagnerian conductor!"

Mr. Seidl's triumph in London was the more remarkable inasmuch as he had to assume charge of an orchestra entirely unused to his methods. He was hampered, too, by certain old-established evils, of which the following extract from a London paper gives an illustration:

"What must have been the feelings of a conductor of Herr Anton Seidl's capacity, when he looked round upon his orchestra at the commencement of the third act of *Lohengrin* on Friday evening—on the orchestra that had to accompany some of the first singers in Europe—and discovered that nearly twenty of his best executants had departed by royal command for the State concert at Buckingham Palace, leaving in their stead a group of no doubt admirable substitutes, but still comparative strangers."

HOW SEIDL CONDUCTED WAGNER

If Mr. Seidl could have had his own orchestra, he would have astonished the Londoners still more. He was, indeed, noted for the skill which he showed in vitalizing an ill-assorted and unprepared band of players; and he could work wonders with few rehearsals. M. Jean de Reszke once remarked to me that he had never taken part in a more smooth and finished performance of *Die Meistersinger* than that which Mr. Seidl had been obliged, much against his wish, to conduct after only one rehearsal. But there is a limit to such feats. When he had the best of material and plenty of preparation, he never failed to reveal the heart, pulse and the very soul of the great composer whose apostle he was. Then, not only did he never drown the singers, but in the softest passages the orchestral tenderness was insinuating and caressing beyond comparison. The way he made his orchestra sing, sigh, whisper, exult, plead, threaten, storm, rage, was a marvel to every one who heard it. The dramatic surges of passionate sound in *Tristan* were irresistible. He knew the scores by heart, and kept his eye on the singers every moment, so that every gesture had its timely orchestral comment. He knew, too, that the same melody must be taken slower or faster, according to the situation. To mention but one detail: The superb eight bars during which the King gives his blessing to Lohengrin and Elsa, were by him, and by him only, so far as I know, given in the slackened, broadened, majestic tempo, which adds so much to the solemnity of the scene, and which Wagner specially prescribed in a letter to Liszt nearly half a century ago. In the later Wagner dramas he made the tempo vary endlessly and have as many little spurts and eddies and dashing falls, and trout pools full of speckled beauties, as a mountain brook. This phase of Mr. Seidl's genius as a con-

ductor was admirably described by W. F. Apthorp after a performance in Boston of *Tristan and Isolde.*

" We must first speak of Seidl, for he was the heart and soul of it. It was he who made the fine performance of the others possible. His management of the orchestra was simply beyond praise ; not once during the whole evening did the instruments unduly over-crow the voices on the stage. Then the orchestral performance, taken by itself, was a marvel of beauty ; such delicacy of shading is exceedingly rare. It was not merely that succession of crass contrasts between fortissimo and pianissimo which sometimes parades under the name of ' shading,' but a hardly interrupted series of the more subtile and delicate nuances in dynamics and tempo. It reminded one of what Mr. Gericke once said of Wagner's conducting *Lohengrin* in Vienna : ' The most striking thing about it was the surpassing delicacy of all the effects; modifications of force and tempo were almost incessant, but were for the most part modifications by a hair's breadth only.' "

TRIUMPH IN BAYREUTH

When Mr. Seidl went to Europe it was not merely to conduct at Covent Garden, but also in Bayreuth. As soon as Frau Cosima Wagner heard that he was coming to Europe she sent him a cable dispatch followed by letters inviting him most urgently to interpret the performances of *Parsifal* in July and August. As the London season extends far into the summer months, and as he had already signed his contract with Mr. Grau, he was obliged to make the condition that the Bayreuth rehearsals must not conflict with the Wagner performances in London. A schedule was accordingly prepared which enabled him to conduct both in London and Bayreuth, without neglecting rehearsals. This involved a good deal of extra fatigue in travelling from one place

to the other, and Anton Seidl was already far from being in good health. It required all of his iron constitution, strong will, and devotion to art, to surprise and enchant both Bayreuth and London in the same month.

And he did surprise and delight Bayreuth as much as he had surprised and delighted London. Dr. Heinrich Porges, an intimate friend of Wagner, and one of the assistants at all the Bayreuth rehearsals from the earliest days, described the reception given to Mr. Seidl at Bayreuth in the Munich *Neueste Nachrichten*. Wagner's son, Siegfried, introduced him to the members of the orchestra in these words: "A Knight of the Grail has returned to us—one who has, alas, been away from Grail-land altogether too long. I present to you Kapellmeister Anton Seidl, one of those best qualified to interpret a work with the composition of which he was closely associated." That the orchestra applauded after these words was a matter of course, but it was not a matter of course, but a very unusual compliment, that the orchestra applauded him after discovering how he performed his task. Porges writes: "Anton Seidl is a conductor of the highest rank. That was made evident at once to the players whom he led with a firm hand; they applauded him already at the end of the first act, and after the second act, which he led with overwhelming passion, they broke out into a storm of applause."

On July 9 Mr. Seidl wrote to his wife a long letter from London, from which I translate a few pages:

"My Dearest Gusterl!

"I have just got back from Bayreuth. I can only say it was glorious. Siegfried, who, by the way, is a charming and immensely talented young man, introduced me to the orchestra very cordially. There was applause; every one was full of curiosity and we went at it immediately with all our might and main.

After the first act the players as well as Frau Cosima broke out into loud and prolonged applause, which was redoubled after the second and also after the third act. I had to make few stops, for the players were attentive and luck favored us so that the result was grand. Truly, Wagner's spirit had come over me; I heard everything distinctly from the beginning, which is very difficult in this lowered orchestral place. My wide experience in conducting in all sorts of places made it easy for me to surmount all difficulties. Everybody declared that no one had ever so quickly and unobtrusively adapted himself to the situation. Frau Cosima embraced me at least twenty times and wept; she said that the good old times seemed to have returned, that I had brought back the conception of the 1882 festival. My way of conducting as well as my face reminded her, she said, of her father [Liszt]. In a word, everybody congratulated me most cordially. The orchestral players declared they had never been conducted as on this occasion and wondered where I got all this. Many offers have already come to me. I was invited to conduct the Kaim concerts in Munich; from Bremen came another offer relating to concerts, and in March and April I was asked to conduct Wagner operas in St. Petersburg, Moscow and Warsaw. A mysterious letter came from Berlin inquiring whether I was willing to accept the position of the foremost conductor in Germany, the writer offering to come to Bayreuth and discuss the matter. Richter advises me to go to Pesth, where they need me, he said, as a starving man needs bread, and so on. So you see—victory in all directions. . . . As for London, Mr. Higgins has already intimated that he counts on me for certain next May, June and July. Now I must close. I kiss you a million times; you poor thing, you have had to wait long for this letter, but my work and excitement did not allow me to

write sooner. At home everything is well, I hope. Another kiss from your faithful

Toni.

"P. S.—Last week I sent £100 to Seligmann's. Use it if needed. Greetings to Rosi, Veroni and friends. Plenty of crackers for Wotan and Mime."

I have met several American music-lovers who had attended nearly all the Bayreuth festivals, and they declared that no one had ever penetrated so deeply into the spirit of *Parsifal* as Anton Seidl. I may add that Wagner intended to have him conduct this, his last work, in 1882; but as the King of Bavaria had lent him his royal orchestra, whose conductor, Hermann Levi, was also a capable interpreter of his scores, it would have been ungracious to carry out his original plan. But if thus deprived of the honor of conducting the first production of *Parsifal*, Anton Seidl had the privilege of leading its one hundredth performance at Bayreuth, and it was, at the same time, the last opera he ever conducted—a touching and beautiful ending of his stage career.

A PERMANENT ORCHESTRA

This was, however, by no means the end of his musical career. It so happened that Mr. Grau gave no opera in New York the following season, the consequence being that Mr. Seidl had to devote all his energies to concerts. There was a series of twelve at the Astoria Hotel, at which the price of a ticket was $5. There were other series in Chickering Hall and in Brooklyn, more than sixty in all, including the Philharmonic concerts, augmented from twelve to sixteen because of their ever-growing success under his direction. And yet he was not contented. He felt more and more strongly that a man of his eminence, called upon to give so many concerts, ought to have his own or-

chestra, of which he could control the membership, the programs, the rehearsals and everything. The situation was described at length in an editorial of mine, which appeared in the *Evening Post*, and which may here be quoted:

"A number of local music-lovers have started a movement for collecting a large fund to be used in founding a permanent orchestra for Mr. Anton Seidl. It is probable that on the success of this movement depends the momentous question whether Mr. Seidl will remain in America or go to Europe. Mr. Seidl made his reputation as a conductor before he came to America, thirteen years ago, and it is well known that in the last years of his life Wagner favored him above all other conductors as an interpreter of his works. He had been in America only a few years when he received an offer of the conductorship of the Royal Opera in Berlin, which, fortunately for New York, he refused. Ever since that time similar offers have come to him nearly every year. The sensation which he created in London last spring as conductor of the Covent Garden opera, and afterwards by his interpretation of *Parsifal* at Bayreuth, made the Germans realize more vividly than ever before that New York harbors one of the greatest of conductors, and offers to him multiplied rapidly. Munich wanted him as conductor of the Royal Opera, and the de Reszkes endeavored to secure him for the opera season at St. Petersburg. Budapest has twice tried to win him, and among the offers of last summer was one of a tour embracing thirty concerts, for which he was to get as personal honorarium $7,500.

"But Mr. Seidl had pledged himself to conduct our Philharmonic concerts, and for this and other reasons he refused all those offers and returned to New York. European managers have, however, apparently made up their mind to get our conductor, and lately several new and tempting offers have been made to him. One was from Hamburg, where they seem de-

termined to secure him, the latest message being, 'Make your own terms.' A few days ago another and still more tempting despatch came from the Royal Opera in Berlin, this being the third time that that most honorable position in all Germany has been offered him. It is a field coveted by all foreign musicians because of its great artistic privileges and opportunities, and because, after a service of some years, the conductor is entitled to a pension. Mr. Seidl is undecided whether to accept or not. He has become an American citizen, is fond of this country, and he realizes that with the Philharmonic Society—as fine an orchestra as can be found anywhere—together with the German branch of the grand opera here and in London, he has a considerable field of activity; yet he is far from satisfied, owing to the conditions under which most concerts are given in this city.

"It must be remembered that in addition to the Philharmonic concerts, for which three rehearsals are allowed, Mr. Seidl has about fifty miscellaneous concerts. For many, if not most, of these he can secure only one rehearsal where he wants three or four. It is true that even thus he attains results more stirring than most other conductors do here and abroad with well-drilled orchestras; but he secures them at an enormous expenditure of energy, which is undermining his health and making him pessimistic. Not long ago, at a certain concert for which he could get only one rehearsal, not one of the brass players who had rehearsed with him turned up. They had secured a more profitable job at a ball, and sent inferior substitutes, with whom—totally unprepared as they were—he had to put up, though the worry lest some accident occur, for which the conductor would be held responsible, nearly made him ill. Such things happen frequently, and unless something can be done to remedy them, Mr. Seidl, who is of a highly nervous temperament, will either collapse or leave us for Europe."

Alarmed by the urgency of the situation, the friends and

admirers of Anton Seidl conceived the plan of raising a fund for the establishment of a permanent orchestra. It was agreed that no conductor had ever aroused a larger and more enthusiastic following than Mr. Seidl, yet he was the only prominent leader in this country who had never been provided with a genuine permanent orchestra. Henschel, Gericke, Nikisch and Paur had the Boston Orchestra to play on as their private instrument, with which no one else could meddle. Mr. Thomas had the Chicago permanent orchestra, Van der Stucken one in Cincinnati, and Mr. Walter Damrosch had for several years an orchestra in New York which was endowed with plenty of money to make it really permanent, and was advertised as New York's only permanent orchestra. The admirers of Mr. Seidl were, therefore, justified in claiming that it was now his turn to have a first-class band provided for him, so he might show whether he could make it permanent and ultimately self-supporting.

It so happened that two projects for a permanent orchestra were started about the same time, neither party knowing of the other. Colonel Robert Ingersoll's family, including Mr. and Mrs. Walston H. Brown and Mrs. and Miss Farrell, together with Mrs. William Loomis and Miss Elizabeth Hunt Welling first approached Mr. Seidl in regard to the matter. When the other party heard of this plan it promptly agreed to coöperate with the friends of Mr. Seidl, feeling convinced that he was the best man for the place. Accordingly in response to an invitation sent out by Mrs. Richard Watson Gilder, Mrs. William H. Draper, Mrs. Richard H. Derby, Mrs. Charles A. Post, Mrs. Charles H. Ditson, Mrs. H. T. Finck and Miss Lucia Purdy, more than a hundred music-lovers assembled at the residence of Mr. W. H. Drake to devise plans for raising funds for a permanent orchestra, presided over by

Mr. Seidl. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Richard Watson Gilder, who called attention to one great advantage music has over other arts: "To build up great works of architecture or sculpture requires many years of waiting, but the art of instrumental musical reproduction can be had in perfection at once. We have a leader of genius, and plenty of first-class players; all we need, therefore, is to hold these together by financial support, and the thing is accomplished. To see any city of the world purveying for itself finer orchestral music than we might make permanently ours is something not to be endured. A city dedicated primarily to trade needs especially the detachment of spirit that comes through hearing the noblest music, nobly rendered."

Dr. W. H. Draper gave a resumé of previous attempts to establish a permanent orchestra in New York, and several more addresses were made. A committee on organization was appointed and had several meetings at the house of Dr. Draper. The following list of officers was submitted and unanimously ratified at one of these meetings: President, Charles T. Barney; Secretary, Gustav E. Kissell; Treasurer, William E. Strong; trustees, W. Bayard Cutting, Richard H. Derby, Charles H. Ditson, Robert W. De Forest, Charles Lanier, Charles F. McKim, Stephen H. Olin, Henry W. Poor, Whitelaw Reid, J. Hampden Robb, Albert Stettheimer, Gustav H. Schwab, Mrs. Robert Abbe, Mrs. Arthur Von Briesen, Mrs. Walston H. Brown, Mrs. Prescott Hall Butler, Mrs. Henry Clews, Mrs. William P. Douglas, Mrs. William H. Draper, Mrs. Richard Watson Gilder, Miss Louisa Morgan, Miss Purdy, Mrs. Victor Sorchan, Mrs. James Speyer.

The terms of the subscription to the guarantee fund were as follows:

"In consideration of the organization of the Orchestra Society of New York and of its undertaking to give musical performances, we, the undersigned, each for himself and not one for another, agree with one another and with the said society, to pay, each year, during the five years beginning May 1, 1898, to the said society at the call of its treasurer, our pro-rata share of any deficiency that may exist between the annual receipts and expenditures of the society, in accordance with the amounts set opposite our respective names. All, or any part of the yearly amount subscribed by us, not called for in any one year, may be called by the treasurer in any succeeding years if the trustees shall so elect, but in no event shall the total liability of either of us be in excess of five times the amount hereinafter set opposite our names. No subscription hereto is to be binding until a total of at least $25,000 has been subscribed for each of the above-mentioned five years."

At the last meeting held, and before subscription blanks had been distributed, it was announced that the sum of $52,000 had already been subscribed by Charles H. Ditson, W. C. Schermerhorn, James Speyer, Charles T. Barney, Charles H. Coster, George T. Bliss, Henry W. Poor, Gustave E. Kissel, William E. Strong, Charles Lanier, Mrs. Gilbert E. Jones and Mr. and Mrs. Henry T. Villard. It had also been announced that Mr. Grau would be glad to engage the Seidl Permanent Orchestra for his opera season, thus insuring the members regular employment for six months a year, and making an addition equal to $80,000 to the fund. He also offered the Metropolitan Opera House free for all rehearsals and concerts. There was no doubt whatever that the additional $75,000 wanted could have been raised in a few weeks. Mr. Seidl was wonderfully elated at the prospect which thus suddenly opened before him.

He gave up all thought of accepting the offers from Berlin and other German cities, and began making plans for the season. The concert-master of the Permanent Orchestra was to be none less than Mr. Ysaye, who would also have conducted some of the concerts. The only difficulty was in regard to the opera, which would take up so much of the orchestra's time that it would not be possible to give more than ten or twelve concerts. It was, however, agreed that that would be enough to begin with, as New York was already flooded with musical entertainments.

THE WORLD AT HIS FEET

Thus, after a few years of undeserved neglect, Anton Seidl had suddenly ascended a lofty summit from which he could survey a grand field of future activity. The whole world lay at his feet—Berlin, Budapest, London, New York, the capitals of Germany, Hungary, England, the metropolis of America, were competing for his services. He had to make his choice, and he decided to take the Grand Opera in London and New York, together with the Philharmonic and the Permanent Orchestras, work enough, in reality, for two men. But he was enthusiastic, and had his body been as strong as his will, he would have accomplished his Herculean tasks. He had been ailing, however, for some time; indeed, he had never quite recovered from the attack of pneumonia he had in 1896, which brought him so near death's door that some of the newspapers had articles headed "Seidl Dying." He told me afterwards that he had a hard struggle with death; he seemed to be ready to drop down a precipice, but held back with his strong will. "If I had yielded the least bit I should have gone over," he said. The last two years of his life had aged him ten in looks. He looked tired and careworn, and was no longer the strikingly hand-

some man everyone had admired for his splendid head no less than for his interpretative genius.

The tragedy of his death has been related by Mrs. Seidl, from whose manuscript I quote once more:

FATIGUING DUTIES

"On my husband's return from Europe, in September, I was alarmed by his sickly appearance, which he declared was due to a severe cold he had caught, and to the fact of his having partaken of no food for twelve days, but which he felt sure a week's stay in the Catskills would cure. He had, evidently, while in Europe overexerted himself, for in addition to the many rehearsals for *Tristan*, *Lohengrin* and *Siegfried*, in London, he also directed the rehearsals for *Parsifal* at Bayreuth. Thus he was compelled to make the journey from London to Bayreuth and return three times. As soon as he finished at Bayreuth, he was at once compelled to return to London, and there conduct several Wagner operas, and immediately after the opera was ended he had to leave again for Bayreuth—a trip which, during the heat of midsummer, is not a trifling matter; especially for a man like Seidl, who put his whole soul into his work without ever considering that this continual strain might, possibly, ruin his health. He did not seem to realize, at that time, what it was to be fatigued, so thoroughly was he imbued with the sacredness of his mission to insure the production of *Parsifal* in accordance with the intentions of his dearly beloved master. His ability to accomplish that result, and his desire to stand on the same hallowed spot where his adored master had stood, at Bayreuth, were compensation enough for all the trouble and annoyance he was subjected to. It is a noteworthy fact, seemingly providential, that the last performance of *Parsifal*

was the *hundredth* of that work and at the same time the last opera Anton Seidl ever conducted. It was his swan song and certainly the most fitting end conceivable of a noble career.

"During the last summer and the following winter he received numerous offers of engagement from the highest art institutes of Europe. His insecure position in this country, where engagements are made from year to year and no engagements are made for a series of years, as is the case in Europe, the many poor years (professionally speaking) which he witnessed, and, last, but not least, his useless complaints when he was called upon to give concerts with but one preliminary rehearsal, discouraged him exceedingly. 'Had I but the means,' he would say, 'to engage a permanent orchestra, what great things I could accomplish if I could command as many rehearsals as I chose.' How often he would say, 'What shall I do? If I tear down all my bridges in Europe I am done for as far as that country is concerned. In Europe I can have as many rehearsals as I wish; my income is assured; I need not kill myself by overwork; after a certain number of years I may retire on a pension, and I have the most honorable position any man could wish. If I remain here it might possibly be my luck to find myself suddenly with nothing to do and in my old age a pauper.' However, his love for his new fatherland prevailed and caused him to give up everything else, although thoroughly convinced that his prospects for the future were by no means bright. He doubted at first if the money for an orchestral fund could be raised. 'But whatever may occur,' he said, 'I am determined to remain in this country, for I love America.'

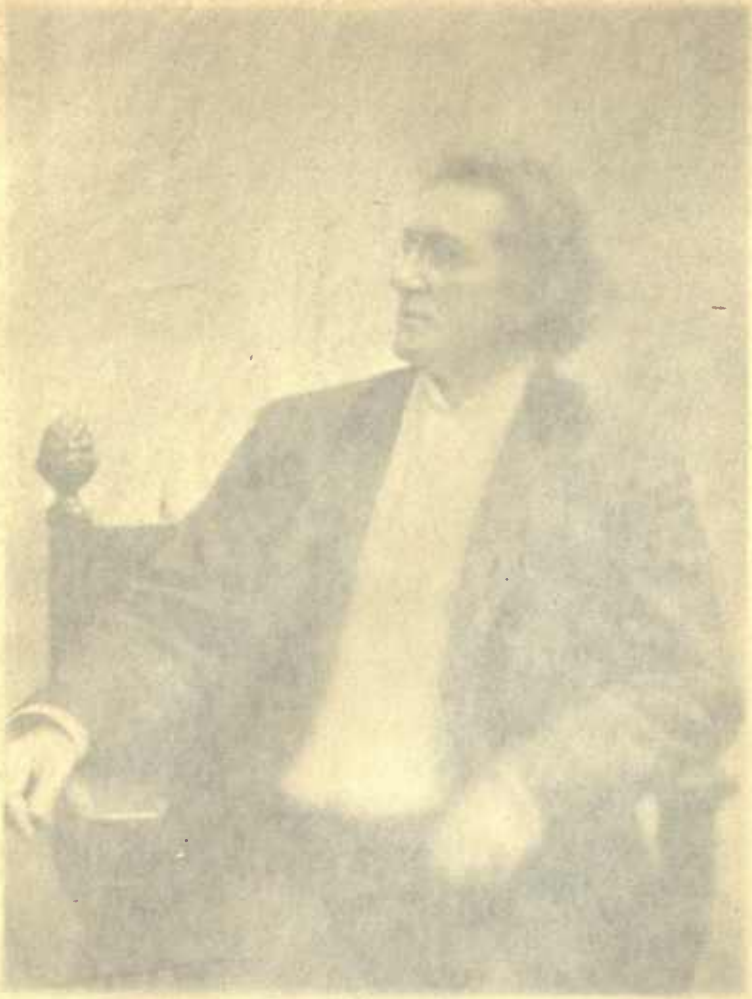
"It goes without saying that all this worry excited him terribly, for how many jeering and heartless criticisms he had to put up with on the part of his enemies! When in addition to this

he could not during the whole winter get rid of the grippe, and I begged him so often not to work so hard, and to try first to recover his health, he always managed to comfort me and appease my anxiety. A short time before his sudden death he was assured by faithful friends and art enthusiasts that he should have his permanent orchestra! So, after all, the dream of his life was to become a reality! How happy and proud it made him. 'Now at last I shall be able to show what I can do! I am sure that in the very first year I shall surprise everybody, and after three years I shall not fear comparison with the best orchestra in the world; and those whose trustful confidence enabled me to realize my highest ideals shall find their pleasure in my success, and will thus find their reward.'

"On Monday, March 28, he had invited Ysaye, Pugno, Gerardy, Schueler and a few other gentlemen to dinner in honor of Pugno, who was to leave for Europe the following Wednesday. I do not know even now why I objected so much to this dinner; my principal reason was that my husband would be kept unusually busy during the week by the Philharmonic rehearsals for the Ninth Symphony, besides other rehearsals; feeling that this would be too much for him in his enfeebled condition, I begged him to give his dinner later on, after the production of the Ninth Symphony; but he insisted on giving it on Monday, because Pugno had to be present and my dear husband had to attend a rehearsal of the chorus on Tuesday.

THE LAST DAY

"On Monday morning, March 28, he got up in the best of spirits. The promise of a permanent orchestra, the approach of the London season where he was to have such excellent artists, besides the promise that all his wishes would be



Anton Seidl

1895

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FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY DUPONT

realized in respect to the Ring of the Nibelungen, including a careful attention to all the stage details, and then, to crown the whole, the conducting of *Parsifal* at Bayreuth — all this was calculated to raise his spirits to the highest pitch, so that he joked and laughed merrily. At eleven o 'clock he had a rehearsal with Madame de Vère and Henry Holden Huss ; after which he had another rehearsal with a foreign singer. Later on came Miss Farrell, with whom he conversed quite a while ; then he took his lunch. Shortly before 2 P. M. he left me to go to Fleischmann's café, where he partook of black coffee and read the papers. He told me he would be home again by six o'clock. Messrs. Ysaye and Schueler arrived first. I asked the former what time it was, and he answered 6.15. " Then Tony may be here any minute," I replied. Presently someone rang the door bell, and Bertha told me that Mr. Bernstein, the brother of my husband's manager, Siegmund Bernstein, wished to see me. Without suspecting anything, I went to see him and he told me that my dear husband had gone to his manager's house quite ill at five o'clock; that he had had serious gastric trouble, which, after a spell of vomiting, had left him unconscious. On his return to consciousness he felt considerably relieved, saying that he would come home after resting a little, and that I should sit down at the table with my guests and proceed with the dinner. I was dreadfully frightened, and turning to the guests, begged them to proceed with the dinner and excuse me, as I had to go to my husband. My maid got me a cab, and I drove with Mr. Bernstein to his brother's house. He told me there was no danger, as a doctor had at once been sent for, but terror had fixed its deadly talons on me, and the horse seemed to crawl. I prayed all the time to God, ' Oh, do not let my dearest fall ill ; let me bring him home well.' When I arrived he lay calmly in bed, but did not open his eyes, nor did he say anything.

Naturally this frightened me, though his breath was calm and regular. I asked the physician if there had been an apoplectic attack, but he answered No, and showed that Tony could, slowly, move his hands and feet. I thanked him, but still fearing the worst, I sent a note to our family physician, Dr. Langmann, begging him to come at once. The letter was sent in our cab. Meanwhile the Bernstein family, who were extremely kind to me, begged me, whenever I tried to speak to my husband, not to disturb his sleep. Unluckily our physician was not in when the note came. When he at last got it and arrived, he asked me, after looking at my husband, what he had eaten, as there seemed to be evidence of ptomaine poisoning. He immediately sent for a stomach pump, and meanwhile begged me not to be alarmed, as my husband's heart had always been very sound, and the pulse was little above the normal beat. He also telephoned for his assistant, but before Dr. Moscovitch could arrive with the stomach pump, a sudden change must have come over my poor dear husband, for Dr. Langmann was working hard to keep up his breathing. Another physician was sent for, and when both the doctors arrived, blood-letting was resorted to—but in vain. He was past human aid: the noblest, best of hearts had ceased to beat."

Dr. Langmann has kindly sent me the following: "Anton Seidl's death was due to one of those exceptionally rare cases when the roe of a shad in springtime develops a deadly poison, so much more deadly since it cannot be detected by sight, taste or smell. There were some minor chronic ailments which must be considered as contributory causes."

The autopsy revealed gallstone and liver trouble. Considering the general state of Mr. Seidl's system it is not likely that he could have possibly carried out the tremendous tasks he had

taken upon himself for the next year. Better than linger in bed during a long illness it was that he should die at the moment of his supreme glory and triumph. This reflection was the only ray of consolation to the poor, heartbroken widow and the multitude of mourning friends.

THE FUNERAL SERVICES

BY

EDGAR J. LEVEY

METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE,

Thursday, March 31, 1898.

MEMORIAL SERVICES,

ANTON SEIDL,

Born May 6, 1850. Died March 28, 1898.

ORDER OF EXERCISES:

1. DIRGE, - Musical Mutual Protective Union.
 Conductor: Nahan Franko.

2. MALE CHORUS, "Wenn Zwei Freunde Scheiden."
 Arion Society. Conductor: Julius Lorenz.

3. "ADAGIO LAMENTOSO"
 from Symphonie Pathétique, - Tschaikowsky.
 Philharmonic Orchestra. Conductor: Richard Arnold.

4. "HELDEN REQUIEM," - - H. Zoellner.
 Deutscher Liederkranz. Conductor: H. Zoellner.

5. ADDRESS by the Rev. Merle St. Croix Wright.

6. "SIEGFRIED'S FUNERAL MARCH." Wagner.
 Philharmonic Orchestra. Conductor: Henry Schmitt.

THE FUNERAL SERVICES

"You shall not come nearer a man by getting into his house."—EMERSON.

THE news of the death of Anton Seidl was a shock for which his friends and the New York musical public found themselves wholly unprepared. On Monday, March 28, 1898, in apparently good health, he went after luncheon to the Vienna Café, at Tenth Street and Broadway, where he was in the habit of reading the foreign newspapers and meeting friends. After leaving there he walked to the house of his manager, Mr. S. Bernstein, 312 East Nineteenth Street, where he first complained of feeling ill. Here his condition rapidly grew so much worse that Doctor Swan, and later Doctors Moscowitch, Wagner and Langmann, were called in attendance. Their efforts were of no avail, and at 10:15 P. M. Anton Seidl breathed his last.

It is a common saying that the renown of an interpretative artist is fleeting and rarely lasts beyond his generation. If so, there is, at least, compensation in the intimate relationship existing with those who come under the immediate sway of his art—a relationship which seems to endow them with a sense of pe-

culiar pride in his fame and to cause a sense of personal grief at his loss.

Anton Seidl held a place in the affections of the American public such as no artist had ever held before, nor, likely, ever will hold. The last are bold words; but with all that the future may hold for art and music in America, it is safe to believe that never again will artistic conditions so ripely await the coming of any man as did those which attended Seidl's entrance into our musical life. Arriving here at the moment when the success of militant Wagnerism only needed his authoritative leadership for complete victory; obtaining that victory speedily and with it the devotion—at first partisan, then universal—which always falls to successful leadership in human strife, even in art; later, the acknowledged centre around which clustered and grew the many activities of our musical world, he was, at the moment of his death, in the fulness of his powers, in the zenith of his glory, and the idol of lovers of an art which finds its field in the play of human emotion. It is not surprising, therefore, that the obsequies of Anton Seidl were attended by a popular demonstration, unique in the depth of feeling displayed by many thousands.

Mrs. Seidl had at first opposed the idea of a public funeral. It seemed to her to ill accord with her husband's simplicity and dislike of ostentation. As soon as the news of his death became known, however, the universal desire of the musical public to give tangible expression to its love and respect became too urgent to be denied. As though assured that there would be a public funeral, every prominent musical organization in the city, instrumental and vocal, professional and amateur, begged, by the adoption of resolutions and by personal appeals, to be allowed to participate in the services. The directors of both the Carnegie Music Hall and the Metropolitan Opera House ten-

dered the use of their buildings, and the offer of the latter was accepted as the more appropriate, it having been with the history of opera in New York that Seidl's career had been most prominently identified.

The day of the funeral was set for Thursday, March 31. The short time allowed to perfect the arrangements necessitated simplicity in the main features of the public function. There was no time to prepare for an elaborate display of pomp, even had that been thought fitting. The musical public, however, were allowed an opportunity for the expression of their heart-felt grief, and their demonstration of that far surpassed in effect the impression that might have been made by more imposing forms.

The services at the Seidl home, No. 38 East Sixty-second Street, were private. At about 12.30 P. M. the funeral cortège proceeding on its way to the Metropolitan Opera House found the streets on the route thronged with sympathetic observers. Not until the procession reached the corner of Fortieth Street and Fifth Avenue, however, did the funeral take on its public character.

At this point there were gathered a hundred representative musicians of the Musical Union, who had volunteered, under the leadership of Victor Herbert and Nahan Franko, to act as a full military band to play funeral music to and from the opera house. Preceding the hearse, this band with thrilling volume and richness of sound began the great Beethoven funeral march (op. 26). The opera house was reached at 1.20 P. M. The streets on all sides were crowded with people who had been unable to obtain entrance, but who waited so that they might at least uncover with bowed heads as the coffin passed before them. The admirable police arrangements prevented the great mass of people from becoming unmanageable.

The pallbearers were Richard Arnold, Carl Schurz, Rafael Joseffy, Eugene Ysaye, Victor Herbert, George G. Haven, A. Schueler, Oscar B. Weber, E. Francis Hyde, David Liebmann, Walston H. Brown, Henry Schmitt, Charles T. Barney, Albert Stettheimer, Julian Rix, Louis Josephthal, H. E. Krehbiel, Dr. William H. Draper, Xaver Scharwenka, Richard Watson Gilder, August Spanuth, James Speyer, E. N. Burghard, Paul Goepel, Edward A. MacDowell, Henry T. Finck, Zoltan Doeme, Albert Steinberg and Edgar J. Levey.

Preceded by the pallbearers and followed by the mourners the remains were borne into the house while the brass band on the stage played a solemn dirge. Instantly the vast assemblage arose and remained standing while the sad procession marched down the aisle. The strains of the music were broken by the sobbing of many. Nothing more dramatic had ever been seen on the stage than that entrance. The same thought was in the minds of everyone. All that was mortal of Anton Seidl was entering the house of his greatest triumphs "zum letzten mal"—for the last time. *His* house, it almost seemed; and this a last home-coming.

The four walls, the auditorium, the stage were felt to be permeated with the memories of those triumphs. The echoes of loud applause and the cheers of bygone days lingered in the air, and there came to the memory an overwhelming rush of the melodies of old.

Down, slowly down to the orchestra pit, and there on a catafalque on the selfsame spot on which he had so often stood in life, he took his place again.

From the railing to the stage the space was draped in black, and surrounding the catafalque on all sides were masses of flowers sent by friends, musicians, artists and singers from all parts

of the world. Three of these pieces call for mention. One was a conductor's desk, bearing an open score, imbedded in the flowers of which there appeared on the one page a portrait of Wagner, on the other, one of Seidl, and the inscription was "Vereint auf Ewig."

Another was a wreath of several thousand violets from Jean and Edouard de Reszke. The third was a floral tribute from Lillian Nordica, who had ever taken pleasure in acknowledging how much of her success in the rôle of Isolde she owed to her studies with Seidl. This bore the singularly appropriate quotation from Isolde's lament before the body of Tristan :

"Closed is the eye, and stilled the heart, and there is not even the zephyr of a passing breath. She must stand before you weeping."

On the stage, which was set as a cathedral and lighted by many candles, sat the members of the Philharmonic Orchestra, awaiting then, as so often before, the rapping on the conductor's desk calling for attention. Surrounded by his friends, on the one side by the musicians he had led, on the other by the public he had moved, there arose and enveloped him for the last time the waves of beautiful sound he had loved so well to evoke.

The short but effective musical programme was excellently rendered, the musicians being evidently moved and inspired by the occasion. In the Tschaikowsky Adagio, which had been one of the favorites of Anton Seidl's last years, there was the note of poignant grief running into self-abasement and crushing hopelessness ; in the Wagner number a glorification, an apotheosis.

The eulogy delivered by the Rev. Mr. Wright was touching and eloquent. In large part extemporaneous and delivered from but few notes, it cannot, unfortunately, be reproduced.

Some of his remarks, however, as recorded in the journals of the day, were as follows:

ADDRESS OF MR. WRIGHT

"What is the mind of man to music? How can his words be heard beside its mighty voice? Yet music was *his* speech. Music is great, because man, its maker, is first great. There is but one mind and one voice that might be desired here to-day, and that is mute. He lies here dumb among the tributes of sorrowing friends.

"To-day we honor a man who first honored himself, who honored us, honored our city and our country by making America a worthy member of the great international musical family. He, as director of the opera, had the courage to give music a new birth, and he may justly be called the premier of the music of America. As the soldier is carried to his grave with flags lowered and amid the volleys, so it is but just that he should lie here amid the scenes he loved so well.

"This, our fellow, was a creator. His magic touch and enchanting sympathy opened a new world. One such work as he has performed is sufficient achievement for a life. He was a foreigner, but of that class of foreigners who make a country native to our souls—a citizen of this country preferring America and by America preferred. He was a leader perpetual in the everlasting war against evil, selfishness, and lust, his only thought to uplift and ennoble men.

"Though dead, he lives. His influence over music is imperishable. As music is the mother of arts, and father of substantial character, so he brought his inspiration and comfort to our wearied souls. Music heals, unites, connects, completes and frees man to his true self.

" All honor to Anton Seidl. He is mourned by two worlds because he brought to each a new world, the inward revelation of the spirit. There lies his bâton. No man shall take it up. Anton Seidl was unique. Anton Seidl forever."

After the Rev. Mr. Wright had finished his words, and just before the funeral march was played, Mr. Krehbiel appeared on the stage and read the following dispatch sent from Wheeling by Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll, a firm friend and devoted admirer :

DISPATCH FROM COLONEL INGERSOLL

" In the noon and zenith of his career, in the flush and glory of success, Anton Seidl, the greatest orchestral leader of all time, the perfect interpreter of Wagner, of all his subtlety and sympathy, his heroism and grandeur, his intensity and limitless passion, his wondrous harmonies that tell of all there is in life, and touch the longings and the hopes of every heart, has passed from the shores of sound to the realm of silence, borne by the mysterious and resistless tide that ever ebbs but never flows.

" All moods were his. Delicate as the perfume of the first violet, wild as the storm, he knew the music of all sounds, from the rustle of leaves, the whisper of hidden springs, to the voices of the sea.

" He was the master of music, from the rhythmical strains of irresponsible joy to the sob of the funeral march.

" He stood like a king with his sceptre in his hand, and we knew that every tone and harmony were in his brain, every passion in his heart, and yet his sculptured face was as calm, as serene as perfect art. He mingled his soul with the music and gave his heart to the enchanted air. He appeared to have no limitations, no walls, no chains. He seemed to follow the path-

way of desire, and the marvelous melodies, the sublime harmonies, were as free as eagles above the clouds with outstretched wings.

" He educated, refined and gave unspeakable joy to many thousands of his fellow-men. He added to the grace and glory of life. He spoke a language deeper, more poetic than words—the language of the perfect, the language of love and death.

" But he is voiceless now ; a fountain of harmony has ceased. Its inspired strains have died away in night, and all its murmuring melodies are strangely still.

" We will mourn for him, we will honor him, not in words, but in the language that he used.

" Anton Seidl is dead. Play the great funeral march. Envelop him in music. Let its wailing waves cover him. Let its wild and mournful winds sigh and moan above him. Give his face to its kisses and its tears.

" Play the great funeral march, music as profound as death. That will express our sorrow—that will voice our love, our hope, and that will tell of the life, the triumph, the genius, the death of Anton Seidl."

At the last words the Philharmonic Orchestra began the funeral interlude from *Die Götterdämmerung* and as its last fading notes died away the final tribute of love and respect had been paid by the music-loving public of the metropolis of the western world, where Seidl had made his home.

" Und scheint die Sonne noch so schön,
Am Ende muss sie untergehen ! "

The procession reformed and, preceded as before by the band of musicians from the Musical Union, the remains were taken

to the crematory at Fresh Pond, where they were incinerated in accordance with the wish that Seidl had so often expressed.

In the vast throng that filled the Metropolitan Opera House, at these obsequies there may have been a few whose presence was to be accounted for merely by that curiosity which often prompts people to attend any imposing public ceremony. To such, if we may imagine them as unmusical and ignorant of the peculiarly intimate relation that existed between Seidl and the New York public, it must have been a cause for astonishment that there should have been manifested such deep emotion on the part of so many thousands, most of whom could have had no personal acquaintance with the dead.

Why should such depth of feeling be exhibited for one with whom no glance had been exchanged, between whom no word had ever passed? Why did the sense of loss seem so personal?

For these thousands a well-beloved friend had indeed passed away—none the less a friend because their communion with him had not been by spoken words. For with friendship it is far less the spoken word that counts than that sympathy which is the consciousness and realization of common understanding and emotion.

Music is the artistic expression of emotion; and when music stirs the heart there is at once established between all listeners a mutuality of sentiment, the sincerity of which is never paralleled in any spoken exchange of ideas. Toward the moving cause of this wonder—the interpretative artist—why should there not exist, when the feeling is deep, such gratitude as is known only in ideal friendship? But Anton Seidl was more than an interpretative artist: he reproduced. All dramatic

music is the physical expression of the composer's emotion; and a great artist, if not so overmastered by the sensualism of his art as to seek a mere tribute to the beauty of musical forms, will arouse that same emotion in his audience.

It was in his dominant freedom from the tyranny of musical notation that Seidl's greatness appeared most manifest. He did not read from his scores as one would read from a book; but, like a great orator, he mastered their contents and then delivered them for the message that was there.

Music alone of all the arts speaks solely through terms of sensual beauty, and it is too often true that a musical performance finds in its means its end; if the ear is pleased, what matters it if the heart be left untouched?

Anton Seidl cared for no music that did not stir the pulse. But if he was moved he would move others; for it was his gift that he could reproduce in tones whatever he felt, naturally, unaffectedly, truthfully, powerfully. In his conducting he ever sought out the feeling that underlay the composition, and the same emotions that in the heart of the composer first gave the music birth he reproduced in the hearts of his listeners. He never let music play itself, or "played it through" as the phrase is. Hence the universal tribute to his "strong individuality"; which meant nothing more than an acknowledgment that, like the perfect orator, he had mastered the spirit of the composition and spoke with conviction. Many conductors, lacking this, and with the end of only enouncing the physical beauty of musical forms, are frequently betrayed into timidity in the execution of phrases. For such as these, the creators and followers of that arid, pseudo-classical tradition, so chilling to art, there is no expression in music where none has been specifically indicated by the composer. If music were always to be interpreted by great artists, composers would,

doubtless, like Sebastian Bach, eschew indications of *tempi* and avoid all dynamic marks. With Seidl, the expression was instinctive, and the discourse never flagged; never became monotonous or commonplace; and if it had been possible to musically annotate his readings, the scores would have been indecipherable from the multitude of marks of expression.

Under him the orchestra truly approached the Wagner ideal of an ever-moving sea of sound; the ebb and fall, the swell and hush of the music were continuous and ever changing. The sympathy of his audiences responded to the beats of his bâton until it seemed as though it were less the instruments of his musicians than the attuned hearts of his listeners upon which he was playing.

And so it was that the thousands mourning at the bier of a dead musician with whom they had never exchanged a word, grieved for the loss of a friend with whom they had so often undergone the same emotions. The essence, the ideal of friendship was there; and that they had been moved together under the spell of music, rather than by the less potent force of spoken words, did but warrant the realization of a closer intimacy.

THE PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY

THE first rehearsal for the eighth concert of the Philharmonic Society was conducted by Anton Seidl, the second by the concert master Mr. Richard Arnold, and the third by Mr. Van der Stucken, of Cincinnati. One of Mr. Seidl's favorite compositions, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, was on the programme. Under the circumstances the last movement with the Hymn to Joy was, of course, omitted and in its place was played the Dead March from *Die Götterdämmerung*, which, as at the memorial services, brought tears to many eyes.

The following official notice was given out with the programme:

"The Philharmonic Society of New York closes its fifty-sixth season, the most successful and prosperous in its history, in sorrow and mourning, through the sudden decease of its late honored conductor, Mr. Anton Seidl.

"After the resignation of Mr. Theodore Thomas in 1891, Mr. Seidl was elected conductor of the society, and has since continuously served in that position until his sudden demise, while actively engaged in preparation for the present concert. Under his leadership the society has uniformly prospered in its attendance and in its artistic results, and the members desire to

place on record their profound respect for his consummate attainments as a musician and their deep sense of loss in his decease.

" Mr. Seidl's genius for conducting was innate, but was fostered by assiduous study and long early association with the masters of this generation. His remarkable insight into the orchestral works performed by the society and the vitality and charm of these performances under his direction will long be cherished in the memories of those who have been guided by him in their performance and by those who have listened to their interpretation."

A BROOKLYN TRIBUTE

I OVERHEARD to-day a child's remark, one who had not reached fourteen years ; it was intended only for the mother's ear. She knew and loved the great artist Seidl in the simplicity of the soul's life. Through the past five years in his public work she had learned through him to understand and love the masters, and was looking forward to further education under this great interpreter. Having wept to exhaustion, upon the news of his death, which came with such appalling suddenness, she said : " We grieve, and it seems impossible to believe he is gone, but I cannot but feel he has passed into that higher sphere to influence all musicians more."

It was a truth I needed, and it is a truth especially needed by his afflicted wife. Our hearts cry out in anguish and rebellious questioning, though we have known him only through his work. Such glorious work ! We shall never forget those soul feasts in the Brighton Beach Music Hall until memory is

merged in the delights of eternity. Those nights and days when we, through this great apostle of art, were taught how great is the immortal soul of man! Those nights of Liszt, Wagner, Mendelssohn and Beethoven! Still, withal, was he hampered, misunderstood and criticised, unable to bring his work to the desired perfection because of paltry dollars, as ever toward that perfection he worked in patient love. We knew what his work was, when orchestral circumstances permitted the moulding by his master hand of the fine material under him. But what, oh merciful, pitying God, what must be the desolation of the heart of his stricken wife? But desolation only, in the first frightful severance of such a tie, as existed between this greatest of all conductors and the companion and partner of his life's work: she being a musician, could support and comfort him in his moments of disappointment and discouragement. None need such loving support as pre-eminently as the artist on all lines. But could she and we lose for a time our own sense of awful sorrow and loss, to look out in spirit and see that nature, expressing itself, without limitation, in the company of those mighty souls whose work he interpreted in so unparalleled a way, one could be glad in his joys, and forgetting our desolation, rejoice with him and for him. Then, blessed truth to all sorrowing hearts, he is not dead, but living! Not merely living in the hearts of all those who were privileged to work with, and therefore truly know him, but living, individually, living as are all the great and mighty ones, aiding and abetting the spiritual work of art.

Those who, in their sordid, narrow, uninspired lives, have thought him cold, let them read his article in the *Music of the Modern World*, "About Conducting," and see there if such can feel the mighty pulsation of the artist soul and recognize at

once the modesty as man and as musician, the manly assertion of his work, who through the master hand could harmoniously blend the different parts of the orchestra into one great and perfect instrument. That article is a classic, in its purity of language, depth of truth and artistic enthusiasm! It was just what we who have loved and known him would have expected. In it one recognizes how great and magnanimous he was; as he explains the advantages and the disadvantages of orchestral work as it exists to-day; hampered as it is by lack of means from being a permanent orchestra in which all the artists work to the mutual benefit of all, instead of being forced to seek outside work to support themselves and families. He knew he had been criticised and blamed through the misunderstanding of his critics, yet he simply makes an impersonal explanation for the benefit of musicians, for the better understanding of music as an art.

How could we know that those high, pure and lofty sentiments, crystallized in perfect form, were to be his last! Those who knew him best knew he had only begun to be, where in individual work he cared to express himself musically.

P. E. A. L.

Brooklyn, March 31, 1898.

BY ALBERT STEINBERG

SEIDL THE MAN

ON an early winter afternoon, about fifteen years ago, there stood near the dingy railway station in Bayreuth a slender, smooth-faced man—he looked scarcely more than a boy then—who could not conceal his grief as did the older people who endeavored to console him.

First a man with a reddish beard and huge spectacles approached him and spoke a few kind words. This was Hans Richter, and every one, even the foreigners, instantly recognized the High Priest of Wagnerian Art. The couple were presently joined by a veritable giant of a man, who had in his pale blue eyes the dreamy and yet the penetrating glance of a prophet. "Albert Niemann," whispered the crowd of mourners, for Richard Wagner's body was expected from Venice, and the little town of Bayreuth was draped from end to end in mourning and the lanterns were flickering feebly, it being a dark, bleak and miserable day.

The little group referred to grew larger every minute, Levi, Piglhein, Lenbach, Reichmann and a host of other notabilities appeared upon the scene. They all spoke in hushed tones and the young man seemed never to hear a word.

Who was he that he should grieve so much more than the others? An artist without a doubt. His sensitive features and the shock of hair that flew wildly about his face would have told you as much the moment you set eyes on him.

A MAN TO KNOW

But was he also near of kin to the dead man that he should be so utterly unnerved? The writer of these lines addressed himself to the Count Schukowski, the master of ceremonies on that lamentable day, and was told that the disconsolate young man was "no other than Anton Seidl. He had at one time been Wagner's private secretary, and had triumphantly taken Angelo Neumann's 'Wagner-Theatre,' not alone through Germany, but also through Italy. The master always had a great affection for Seidl," the Count continued, "had taken the warmest interest in his career; he feels, of course, as if he had lost his dearest

friend. You should know him, for he is a man of great personal charm and surely a remarkable artist, for you know that Richard Wagner never had the least patience with any one who wasn't."

Little did I think that the man who interested me so much then was destined to spend nearly the remainder of his days in America.

For in the fall of '85 I was suddenly accosted on the street by a friend, who, before I knew it, presented me to Anton Seidl.

I told him that it wasn't our first meeting, and when I recalled to him the incidents of that mournful day in Bayreuth he instantly grasped me by the hand as if I were indeed an old friend. He spoke sadly and reminiscently of the first meeting, but when I said: "Now, really, Kapellmeister, what did you think of the funeral march from *Götterdämmerung* as it was played by the Bayreuth town band at Wagner's funeral?" he burst into uncontrollable laughter, for his sense of musical humor was of the keenest.

"LOHENGRIN" REVEALED ANEW

A few weeks after this encounter Seidl conducted for the first time in New York, *Lohengrin* being the opera. We all thought we knew that opera perfectly well, and yet it sounded so differently that many of us were greatly puzzled. Not alone were the climaxes built up in a strange manner, the melos brought out in a more plastic fashion, and a hundred lovely poetic details supplied that were formerly missing, but the opera, as I have already observed, sounded differently. Being asked why this was so, Mr. Seidl smiled and even winked, but refused to give any further explanation. For my own part, I think that Mr. Seidl may have had the same experience with *Lohengrin* in New

York that Hans Richter had in London. When the latter rehearsed the opera the first time in the English capital it suddenly leaked out that the parts contained no less than one hundred and eighty-six errors, and that it had been given in this way, mistakes and all, for something like a quarter of a century.

Let that be as it may, Anton Seidl was acclaimed a musician of the highest type the moment he made himself heard here. And his success grew apace. With every new interpretation the number of his adherents became larger, their admiration more fervent.

AN "AMERICAMANIAC"

Wherefore Mr. Seidl determined forthwith to settle down here with his wife—who, as Auguste Kraus, was known as one of the brightest ornaments of the German Opera Company—and to become an American citizen. In those days he was afflicted with "Americamania" in its acutest form. Everything appealed to him—our democratic ways, our enthusiasm for the works of Wagner, our mixed drinks, our Welsh rarebits, our American clubs, our American scenery. He lived for a while with his wife in West Thirty-eighth street, but decamped quickly for reasons that had better not be told, though a French maker of farces would embrace you for telling him these reasons. Resolving never to be taken in again, Anton Seidl and his wife took up their quarters for a while in the apartments of the Metropolitan Opera House, but it was not until they took a house of their own that even their intimate friends had the slightest notion of the couple's charming domestic attributes. For never was there a house in which you met with such boundless hospitality, with such truly interesting people.

MIME, THE SPOILED CHILD

At first it contained, besides the servants, but four inmates—viz., Mr. Seidl, Mrs. Seidl, Bertha, their trusted companion, and Mime. Mime was the spoiled child of the family and the sweetest, cleverest and most devoted Dachshund that ever came over the water. To be sure he was not very musical, but he could do things that no "Dackel" ever did before. When he saw other "Dackels" showing off, by sitting for a moment on their hind legs, Mime would bark in derision, for Mime always sat on his hind legs. It was as easy to him as is the G minor Mendelssohn concerto to a modern piano virtuoso.

There were other and finer things that Mime could do.

Thus, when Mrs. Seidl would say, "Wie spricht der Hund" (let me hear the dog speak), this canine prodigy would actually talk. What he said was, of course, intelligible to Mr. and Mrs. Seidl only; also, perhaps, to the faithful Bertha, who would obligingly interpret to the visitor the wise remarks of Mime. But even the man who was not up in Dachshund lore could understand the sapient Mime the moment the lid of the grand piano was opened. He would growl and snarl and retire to the dining-room, for music made his breast savage, and neither Bach nor Wagner would soothe him in the least. As soon as all had become quiet again Mime would reappear in the drawing room to exhibit to the astonished guests his most artistic feat. Walking on his hind legs, he would approach Mr. Seidl and "speak" in most ingratiating tones. Mime's master would refuse to listen until the dog whined and begged and implored. Then, and not until then, would Mr. Seidl lower the hand which held his burning cigar, from which Mime with his left paw would brush off the ashes. To describe the amazement of the uninitiated visitor, the delight of Mr. and Mrs. Seidl, and the haughty pride with

which Mime—his feat once accomplished—would take himself off to bed is really quite impossible.

EARLY FRIENDS IN AMERICA

In the early days of his American life Mr. Seidl had only a few friends who saw much of him. He cared but little for society and he did not acquire the English language as easily as did his wife. The circle then consisted of Mr. Edgar J. Levey, now assistant Deputy Controller, who was so brimful of musical enthusiasm that he even studied German to make himself intelligible; of Mr. Oscar B. Weber, of Niemann, the most commanding figure of the German operatic stage, and several others. Wagner's music was not as familiar then as it is nowadays, and nothing gave Anton Seidl greater joy than to sit down at the piano and unfold to his friends the beauties of Wagner's scores. He had little or no technique from a virtuoso's point of view. And yet he played the instrument in a manner that was unique. His touch was so beautiful that the piano seemed to sing, and he could play in a manner that was truly orchestral.

THE MUSIC HE LOVED

The music of Wagner was, of course, his religion, but he loved Bach passionately. If ever you took him in his study unawares you found him pondering over a prelude or a sonata of the pious old cantor. Latterly he was wrapped up in Tschaikowsky, too, and these three masters—Bach, Wagner, and Tschaikowsky —he revered more, I think, than any other composers. They appealed more strongly to his temperament; but it must not be thought for that reason that he was not in sympathy with other things he undertook, for he was a firm believer in the old saw that what is worth doing at all is worth doing well, and nothing

could have been more unjust than the charges which were frequently brought that Mr. Seidl slighted all music that was not Wagnerian. These rumors frequently prejudiced people against him, especially distinguished singers and pianists. Yet when Mr. Seidl unexpectedly led *Faust* one evening Jean de Reszke, who had never sung this opera under him before, remarked to me: "I was never so surprised in my life, for I never sang with so much ease and assurance before. The man seemed to anticipate everything I did, and accompanied me as if we had studied the part together for years."

Similarly did Mr. Joseffy express himself to me when he first played to Seidl's accompaniment one of the Tschaikowsky concertos in Philadelphia some years since. "Seidl can conduct anything—when he wants to," was the virtuoso's verdict.

SEIDL'S WIT AND WISDOM

No one enjoyed this qualified panegyric more than Seidl did himself when he heard of it. It cannot be said that he was a great wit himself, but he greatly admired that quality in others. On the other hand, he possessed a certain dry humor that was delicious, and which was doubly delightful to those who understood the Austrian dialect, in which he always spoke. To mention but two of his sallies which went the rounds at the time they were made.

A young singer whose voice was gorgeous, but whose talent, as is frequently the case, was infinitesimal, often pestered him by asking him his advice. She had just been making bad slips at a rehearsal and came to him, score in hand, saying, with a mixture of composure and contriteness, "Now, what do you advise me to do, Herr Kapellmeister?" And gazing steadfastly at the young woman for a minute or two he retorted,

with the utmost deliberation, "I advise you" — emphasizing the latter pronoun—"to marry some rich old tradesman." And the lady did!

Again, when the agents of Richard Strauss made what he considered exorbitant demands for the performance of "Thus Spake Zarathustra," Mr. Seidl observed, "I know that Zarathustra spoke a great deal, but he didn't say that much."

Rehearsals worried him ineffably, for he was always willing to give up hours of his time to them, to discuss with the members of the orchestra what he thought and felt and what he wanted. On such occasions he was never met even half-way. The instrumentalists, who owed him much, instead of listening to wisdom such as they may never hear again, bethought themselves of their private lessons and often grew restive till Mr. Seidl himself lost all patience.

A FAVORITE RESORT

But rehearsals or no rehearsals, and in good humor or in ill-humor, you could see him every afternoon at about three wending his way to the Café Fleischmann, situated at the corner of Tenth Street and Broadway. Detesting walking as he did, he would take the Fourth Avenue car, and, indifferent to all climatic conditions, always stand on the front platform smoking his cigar. To the majority of the drivers and brakemen the gentleman in the high silk hat, and the long hair, was known simply as "The Professor." That's a funny little democratic way we've got. A few who were curiously interested made it their business to discover his identity, and, upon boarding the car, courteously saluted him as "Mr. Seadle."

But his was a familiar figure not at Fleischmann's alone, but in all uptown resorts as well. At the Waldorf-Astoria, at

the Stewart House (where he stopped whenever his town house was closed), and at Delmonico's, the attendants looked pleased the moment they clapped eyes on him, for he was not only exceedingly generous, but also very courteous to those who ministered to his wants.

The most lovable side of the man's nature, however, was revealed when he was quite free from care. Before he went to London for the last time, he went to his summer home in the Catskill Mountains. There, in a place called Fleischmann's—though better known by its former name which was Griffin's Corners—Mr. Seidl was as full of life and pranks as a schoolboy. Had the place been a bit of his own Hungarian Fatherland, he could not have been fonder of it. And when any of his friends came up from the city to visit him he was in a veritable transport of joy. Nothing was too good for such a one, and Mrs. Seidl, who was one of the most loyal, devoted wives man ever had, vied with her husband to make the guest feel at home.

Heavens, how those people did feast! Even Mr. Pepys, of diary fame, would have been satisfied. A dozen people could have turned up for dinner unexpectedly and yet the supply of Leberknoedel-Suppe, of trout, of Backhaendl and of Apfelstrudel would never have given out. The wines, too, being of the choicest vintage, the house naturally rang with mirth and laughter upon such occasions.

HIS DUMB FRIENDS

But when there were no people Mrs. Seidl, in spite of a horde of servants, would herself look after her vegetable garden or after her kennel, for Mime no longer ruled as autocrat in the house of Seidl. He had nearly been dethroned by Wotan, a



Summer Home in the Catskills

September, 1897

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huge St. Bernard, who knew a trick or two himself. And, besides, there were eight other little Dachshunds, such as "Froh," and "Freia," and "Valla," and other crooked-legged creatures with Wagnerian names. Whenever Mr. Seidl was away for a time it was a sight to witness this regiment of canines scamper down the hills to greet him upon his return. They were all tricked out in ribbons of the gaudiest colors; some of them, I do believe, carried little flags in their collars, and when the train came in, down would they rush toward the station, making noises that were surely never heard even in Dante's Inferno. But to Anton Seidl's ears it sounded like the music of the spheres.

Never were dogs so petted and spoiled and pampered, and never were dogs so shrewd, so foxy. When Christmas came around they knew it as well as anyone, and the man that would have dared to make Herr Mime believe that it was Easter would have run a good chance of leaving a piece of his leg and his trousers behind him. Upon my word, I do also believe that these dogs hung up their stockings on the night of December 24th just like other children, for they had a Christmas tree—not a puny, measly tuppenny Christmas tree, but a great big, splendid Christmas tree—and for each dog there was suspended from various branches a huge sausage, and each sausage had a label on it, such as "For Wotan," "For Mime," etc., for those dogs could read!

TRAGEDY OF THE KENNEL

And to think of it! The pity, the horror of it! In that happy dog family murder most foul was done in the end; for one day Wotan, whose name should have been Hagen, caught Mime by the throat, crushing the life out of the poor, dear, faithful brute then and there.

To poor Mr. Seidl this was, in all seriousness, a fearful

blow. He could not bear the sight of the big, treacherous St. Bernard after that, and when he spoke of the murdered Mime, which he did to his intimates only, he did not mind showing his grief.

A man that was as fond as Anton Seidl of the dumb brute was a good, a lovable man, depend upon it.

The music he made often transported the listener to heaven. His kindness to his dogs must have made them think they were in Paradise.

BY JAMES HUNEKER

SEIDL THE SPHINX

ANTON SEIDL is dead. When Balfour wrote his famous "Conservation of Energy" we who believed in impersonal immortality were delighted. Here then was a means by which one could escape through the gateway of life into eternity and without the bells of dogma buzzing on one's collar. But test this new evangel of science by the heart-throbs ; consider it calmly when the soul cries in anguish for the beloved one whose voice is forever stilled on this side of the sun, and how cold, how artificial, how desolate seems such philosophy !

Anton Seidl is dead, and shall we never see him face to face again? This question obdurately propounded itself to us when we saw a casket borne into the Metropolitan Opera House the last day of March, and this question smote us as it was taken to the crematory. Alas ! it is a question no theologian, no man of the laboratory, may answer.

I met the great Wagner conductor in December, 1885. I well remember the occurrence, for I was a hero-worshipper then,

and the man with his elemental energy seemed a sort of demi-god. He gave us a new Wagner—the real Wagner—and little wonder he soon dethroned other conductors. He had the temperament; above all he had the tradition.

Seidl had few intimate friends. I could hardly count myself among them. I was seldom alone with him, yet each time we saw Broadway in the early morning light. Then he talked —talked for hours, if not fluently, gracefully. It is a mistake to suppose his reticence meant ignorance. On one subject at least he was at home. He knew by heart the Wagnerian literature and its polemics. He was saturated with Wagner and it was his bible. He was an organism framed by nature and training for conducting. All else was subordinated to this unique purpose.

The man was an incarnated bâton.

Seidl cared little for literature or painting, yet he was not insensible to either. He told a friend that he purposed studying Brahms. "He is a great man," said he. He knew Schopenhauer, and spoke intimately of Nietszche and Richard Strauss. Yet the laconic habit of the man was all but irremediable. He was pervious to the influences of good-fellowship, but let a stranger intrude and like some deep-sea organism Seidl shut up and looked grim things through you and over you. His face at such times was granitic; carved in implacable stone. He made enemies easily, friends slowly; his very failings were virile, his virtues masculine.

He was a man to his enspheréd soul!

A slow irony variegated his speech, but it was of the Juggernaut sort. It crushed; it killed. His smile was sweet and it could damn, for about his wonderfully expressive mouth were lines of sarcasm, and while they warmed into life in a measured manner they were none the less effective.

Seidl was the greatest *crescendo* maker this generation has heard. We all hear big *crescendos*, but if they are nervous they lack weight. If they have the right weight they are apt to be otiose and lacking in nerve fiber. Seidl had the passionate pulse, and he went down, down until the very bowels of the earth were reached. How his basses did play *Tristan and Isolde*, the *Ring*, *Lohengrin*, *Die Meistersinger!* Who can do more with these dramas than did Anton Seidl?

When Seidl was silent you could almost hear him thinking. He had the sort of personality that overpowered through sheer existing. Without any apparent volition on his part he made one feel that he was a distinguished man—a man among men.

His funeral was more impressive than any music drama ever seen or heard at Bayreuth. The Metropolitan Opera House was for the moment transformed into a huge mortuary chamber. It was extremely picturesque, yet sincerely solemn. The trappings of woe were not exhibited for their mere bravery. A genuine grief absorbed every person in the building, and when Henry Edward Krehbiel read Robert G. Ingersoll's dispatch the quaver in his voice, a thousand times more significant than the rhetorical phrases he uttered, set many sobbing.

It was a time for tears.

The stage setting was a mixture of the church scene in *Faust*, with suggestions of *Le Prophète*, and even *The Queen of Sheba*. The marmoreal hush, the sad burning tapers, the huge multitude, and that casket—that casket resting where once on his heels had stood an erect man with the eye of a general and the brain of a poet.

It was overwhelmingly touching.

Seidl had that indefinable quality we call individuality. His mask was the great comedian's or the mask of the ecclesiastic.

His manners had a touch of the churchly, and involuntarily your eye looked for the Episcopal purple ring on his finger. His garb suggested the priestly, and with his strongly-modelled Gothic head—a head the replica of Liszt's—his picturesque and flowing hair, smooth-shaven face and emotional mouth, he was a figure of rare dignity and distinction. His eyes alone were eloquent when his other features were Sphinx-like—brown, almost black; while conducting they riveted his men with a glance of steel. It was the eye omniscient, for his tympanist, his contrabassist, his concertmaster will tell you that he seemed to watch each and every man thoughout a performance. The magnetism of the man was the magnetism of the sphinx. It was not always a pleasing magnetism. He went to a Wagner music-drama in a sacrosanct mood. It was his religion. Outwardly as calm as bronze, his orchestra from the first tap of his stick felt the electric impulse, the unyielding will of this Bismarck of conductors. To me he always seemed a sphinx, the sphinx of Wagner, who knew Wagner's secret voices and interpreted them magnificently. Alas! that Anton Seidl is dead.

BY HENRY WALLER

THE first time I met Mr. Seidl was about five years ago, when I had just finished the score of my first opera, *The Ogalallas*. I shall never forget his kindness to me when I presented myself to him, a complete stranger and with a very bulky manuscript under my arm. I believe the servants of most conductors have standing orders to admit no one carrying any sort of a parcel which looks as if a manuscript might be concealed in it. Mr. Seidl, though, was kind to everyone who went to him for his

advice or assistance; whether he knew them or not did not matter. As an example of this I may mention that he examined carefully the score of my opera (and hard enough it must have been to decipher, since it was my first work for the orchestra), suggested many alterations, and took a great amount of trouble for one he had never seen before. This was the beginning of my acquaintance with him, and he always showed the same kindness and interest. I have been at his house often when people have called to sing or play to him, and he always gave them his attention. Once—last winter—when I took him the prelude to an opera, *Cleopatra*, he went all through the score with me—also asked me to play it to him; and it was only by the servant entering with a message from Mrs. Seidl, "Would Mr. Seidl please go back to his dinner?" that I discovered he had left the dining table to keep the appointment he had made with me. At a rehearsal of the same prelude, which he played at one of the Sembrich concerts, he took the same pains, playing it three or four times till it went to suit him. I am dwelling on this side of Mr. Seidl's character because I think that by many people he was not credited with one quarter of the real kindness of heart he possessed. His manner at times was abstracted and "indifferent," and he had a disconcerting way of looking sometimes at people of his acquaintance as if he had never seen them before. A stranger meeting him in one of these moods might have supposed him to be of a morose temperament, but the contrary was the case, as all who knew him can testify. His fondness for animals alone was a quite sufficient proof of the kindliness of his nature. As to his talents, the world has judged of them; for, in spite of his sudden death in the middle of his career, he had already taken his place—in Europe as well as in America—and as a conductor of Wagner's later works he was

supreme. A member of his orchestra told me that the last scene of *Tristan and Isolde* always moved Seidl to tears, so deeply did he feel this wonderful music. When he died he had not only the respect and admiration of the whole musical world, but the sincere affection of all who knew him.

BY HENRY HOLDEN HUSS

HAVING been asked to give a few personal reminiscences of Anton Seidl, I would like to recall some features of a picturesque instance of his versatility, and right here let me pause and say that Seidl, within certain well defined, limits *was* versatile.

Of course his great, supreme gift lay in his appreciation of the intensely dramatic moments of Wagner's music, the climaxes—the Gipfelpunkte as the Germans would say.

His masterly power in reproducing the overwhelming moments of *Tristan und Isolde*, *Die Götterdämmerung*, *Siegfried*, etc., will always be his strongest claim to be numbered amongst the short roll of giants who have wielded the bâton and played upon great orchestras and vast audiences, as a violinist plays upon his instrument, but the versatility of the man was not so widely known and recognized. One has, however, but to recall the wonderfully varied phases of emotion to be met with in Wagner's music—the naïve realism of *The Flying Dutchman*, the tender romance and poetry of *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser*, the ideality, youthful passion, rough humor and chivalry of *Die Meistersinger*, the marvelous intensity of that flower of poesy *Tristan und Isolde*, with its white heat of passion, and *The Ring of the Nibelung*—that vast panorama, with its programme music, the introductions to *Rheingold*, *Walküre*, the Ride of the Wal-

küren, the forest music of *Siegfried*, its heroic strength, idyllic charm, romance and passion, grotesque humor, grandeur, tragedy, and majesty, and last of all *Parsifal*, that wonderful dual picture of mediæval mystical poetry, religious feeling and earthly allurement—I say one has only to recall how wonderfully and completely Seidl entered into *all* the manifold shades of feeling to realize that in being the great Wagnerian interpreter that he was, he manifested remarkable versatility. But I wished to tell of other instances of this trait; for instance, his sympathetic and wonderfully vivid and noble performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Seidl, on being told what a deep impression his conducting had made, replied modestly enough to me, "Well, there you have Wagner's ideas on the subject." What was specially striking was the elasticity of the tempi, making the music most spontaneous in its appeal to one.

Then, again, witness his *intime* appreciation of Liszt, Berlioz, Tschaikowsky, Dvořák—the latter amongst other qualities with his Schubertian lyricism. All moderns, you say, quite true; but with what infinitely varied differences in their music! One should not forget, also, the dignity and self-restraint of his Bach interpretations.

In summoning up these memories an interesting paradox presents itself, viz.: although he was one of the most subjective of artists, yet in his great moments you forgot his own personality, the orchestra, the audience, and felt only the power of the music which he was literally re-creating anew for you.

The picturesque instance of his versatility, of which I wish to take notice, occurred at the beautiful home of Mrs. Phoebe Hearst in Washington. The idea was to present Haydn and his orchestra at the Court of Prince Esterhazy.

Seidl, the orchestra, all the guests, the lackeys, everyone was in the costume of 1760. Seidl, of course, made an ideal figure in the ancient costume, with his clear-cut features, as Papa Haydn, a lost opportunity for a characteristic portrait. And never was the farewell symphony played with greater delicacy, refinement and grace. The ending was especially effective with its gradual diminuendo, each musician blowing out his candle and quietly leaving his desk, until Seidl-Haydn and his "concertmeister" were left alone in the fast-gathering gloom.

One of the numbers of the programme which called forth an interesting comment from him was a little known and archaic Trio of Haydn played by the first violinist, the 'cellist and myself. The delicately, almost ethereally toned grand piano was an ancient instrument, made by Stein, in Salzburg (Mozart's birthplace), in 1760, with an action like thistle-down, and having all its black keys white and its white keys black, as an Irishman would say.

Seidl remarked after the performance of the Trio that the early chamber music of Mozart and Haydn would have better balance if just such old instruments were used. The delicacy and discretion (rare quality!) of Seidl's accompaniments of a couple of Mozart Arias sung by Mme. Blauvelt at the same concert proved that the great Wagnerian conductor had the same love and appreciation for Mozart that Wagner himself possessed.

In suggesting the writing of this little tribute of affection, the editor desired me to tell how helpful Anton Seidl had been in giving counsel and advice in regard to my compositions, as this kindly side of his character was one little known to the great public. So, what otherwise might have been considered intrusive egotism will, I trust, be accepted as a sincere tribute of gratitude. Few musicians would have bothered themselves as he did, on an

extremely torrid day at Brighton Beach, to listen to a violin concerto, to go into the pros and cons of the instrumentation, whether the solo instrument was allowed due prominence, etc., in all displaying a discriminating musicianship and keen appreciation of musical perspective which is, alas, so often lacking in otherwise great conductors. Although boasting at the time of but a very slight acquaintance with him, this was but the first of many conferences about this and other of my compositions, and it mattered not whether his criticisms were laudatory or otherwise, I never left him without being stirred and inspired to fresh endeavor. A number of my colleagues can testify in the same way of the generous and painstaking interest manifested in their compositions.

Never-to-be-forgotten was the last time I saw him ; it was the morning of the day he died. Mme. de Vere-Sapio had come with me to his home in 62nd Street for a piano rehearsal of my *Cleopatra's Death*, which she was to sing at the last Philharmonic concert. How animated he was ! how full of helpful suggestions —suggestions which went to the heart and marrow of the subject ; in his excitement, beating time as if the whole one hundred and ten men of the orchestra were present, as they doubtless were to his vivid imagination. On leaving him, as if actuated by an unconcious presentiment, we inquired particularly how he felt ; he replied that he was in tolerable health only, and smiled as I playfully remarked that it would never do for him to be ill for the last Philharmonic concert of the season—a concert, alas, which was to be his dirge !

There was in my experience only one performance of the Siegfried death music, which was played at this concert, which equalled it in impressiveness and pathos, and that was in the great bare Munich Bahnhof when Richard Wagner's body, resting in a plain gray freight-car, with no distinguishing mark save

a single laurel wreath lying on top, was transferred from one track to another, and several combined military bands made the vast structure resound with the mighty apotheosis.

We, who were the friends of Seidl, will always regret that his cherished wish never came to fruition, viz.: that of having an opera company under his control. Well do I remember his saying: "Once before I die, I would like to have the Wagner operas and other good operas: *Fidelio*, *Euryanthe*, *Don Juan*, etc., performed as they should be, and especially the Wagner operas, as I know Wagner desired to have them. I should select with extreme care the stage manager, etc.; I would have rehearsals of the chorus the preceding summer; every detail of the *mise-en-scène* should be looked after; the goal should be a truly artistic whole."

It is pleasant that the prospect of a truly permanent orchestra, with opportunities for unlimited rehearsals, should have made his last days—as Mrs. Seidl remarked—amongst the pleasantest of his life. But *why* did New York wait until he was on the threshold of the grave? Surely in his case Shakespeare's dictum that "the good that men do is oft interred with their bones" is wrong.

Can lapse of time, or other experiences ever rob us of the enthralling delight, the poesy, the mighty rush of emotions awakened and called into life by his wonderful dramatic gifts?

BY VICTOR HERBERT

WHEN I first came to the United States, in 1886, I had known Anton Seidl only by his great reputation as a Wagner disciple, then so widespread in Europe. He was at that time in the second year of his work at the Metropolitan Opera

House. The musicians comprising his orchestra had readily come to appreciate his profound knowledge of Bayreuth tradition, alike of the stage and the orchestra. They had found in Seidl a man thoroughly imbued with Wagner's ideas, both in the general conception and in the smallest detail of each opera. He fairly bristled with animated energy, and was ever alert to right the minutest of errors. His thorough knowledge of this work, which with him was a life passion, enabled Seidl to make incredible progress with both players and singers in the preparation of his superb productions. The great presentation of *Tristan and Isolde* at the Metropolitan Opera House in the year mentioned was accomplished with but five rehearsals with the orchestra, including the one set apart for correction of the orchestral parts.

But our conductor never took to himself any credit for such remarkable achievements. Always anxious to ascribe honor where honor was due, he attributed this, the greatest success of the season, to perfection of discipline in the orchestra, the ready perception of its members and their fine routine in orchestral work. To his soloists he was ever anxious to accord a full measure of praise. In 1886, for instance, the principals included Lehmann, Auguste Kraus, Marianne Brandt, Niemann, Robinson, Anton Schott, Alvary and Herbert-Foerster, whose artistic contributions to these great operatic performances were graciously recognized by the conductor, his characteristic modesty invariably placing them and the orchestra before himself.

The musicians frequently saw that the music affected Seidl most profoundly. He was a man of deep emotion. Certain passages in *Siegfried* and the wonderful closing scene of *Tristan* always made him cry like a child, so that by the time the curtain had dropped he would be in a state of emotional collapse.

Seidl was universally admired and loved by the members of his orchestra. He never showed the faintest trace of false pride. His players were his companions, his helpers; he was simply one of them. It was through this strong bond of fraternity that he came to acquire a powerful personal influence over the instrumentalists which was entirely distinct from the musical magnetism exerted in rehearsals and public performances. This all-powerful, impelling yet unfathomable power of control imperiously commanded his followers in the orchestra by first awaking their entire interest and then spurring them on to efforts that they could make under the bâton of no other master. The graceful, incisive, clean-cut movements of his stick were intelligible at all times. And, for his part, Seidl always relied implicitly upon the quick perception of his musicians, never wasting time in unnecessary explanations of what was to be brought out in this bar, or avoided in that. We always knew by a glance from his eye just what was expected of us.

Mr. Seidl was a man little given to words. As it was once so aptly remarked of von Moltke's position in the realm of scientific warfare, so may it be said of Anton Seidl as a musician and conductor, that he was "der grosse Schweiger" (the great silent). Yet he never failed to say the right thing in the right place, and many anecdotes are related of his quick wit and dry humor. When he talked it was because he had something to say; and as many of his friends can attest, he was exceptionally apt in his remarks.

Some years since, after a performance of his orchestra at Brighton Beach, a few of us sat down towards midnight for a lunch with Mr. Seidl in his favorite café. There were present in the little party several musicians, and among the enthusiastic amateurs of music a prominent New York manufacturer, who was

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an ardent admirer of Italian opera. For twoscore years or more had this gentleman faithfully attended all of the Italian opera presentations in New York ; he had fraternized with all the famous artists who sallied forth from their Milan stronghold to make conquests of New World audiences. As one would naturally expect, during the course of the evening he turned the drift of conversation upon the subject of his favorite hobby. Niemann was present, and, if I mistake not, there may have been another singer or two in the little gathering. All save Seidl had something to say about the decadence of the ultramontane school of opera. Finally, when the subject seemed to have been exhausted, the conductor made a few remarks.

He was known to be very fair in his judgment of men and their works. He admired all that was good in Italian operatic music, but was ready to condemn what was rubbish. Many of the singers from sunny Italy he regarded as great; Campanini's glorious voice and superb vocal art were his especial admiration. But his profound regard for the eternal fitness of things appeared to instigate this brief succinct expression of his views on the topic under discussion.

"In the property room of the Metropolitan Opera House, gentlemen, there is a helmet." He paused for a moment, reflectively puffed at his cigar, and then resumed: "It may be tarnishing now, but a year or two ago it was brightly burnished. If you were to hunt it up you would find that this specimen is much like other helmets save for the 'Schwanritter' emblem which it bears. It was made for *Lohengrin*, and my dear friend Campanini wore it in a truly magnificent performance of the rôle. Yet if you were to find that helmet to-day you would discover that in addition to the prescribed dimensions and insignia of this piece of knightly headgear Mr. Campanini had put on a blue

plume, probably three feet in length. That, my dear gentlemen, is Italian opera."

Seidl's death was the pathetic termination of a career which had just fairly realized its highest ambitions. He had just come into the acquisition of all that he hoped for. Strong influence had secured for Seidl a substantially permanent orchestra. This was a well-deserved recognition of his merits and talents. He had the Philharmonic Society, and the Metropolitan Opera House German productions. He had the promise of regular work at Bayreuth festivals; and a permanent engagement at Covent Garden, in London. And in the midst of all this, the ripe harvest of a busy life, Seidl was stricken down.

APPRECIATIONS
BY
MUSICAL CRITICS

BY H. E. KREHBIEL

A FEELING very much akin to dismay has filled the music-lovers of New York since Anton Seidl died suddenly on the night of March 28th, 1898. Until he was gone, it was hard to realize how large a place he had filled in the musical economy not only of New York, but the world. His death left a gap in the operatic forces of the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, and Covent Garden, London; robbed the Philharmonic Society of New York of a conductor under whom it enjoyed six seasons of unexampled prosperity; weakened the artistic props of the Wagner festivals at Bayreuth, which have been more and more in need of fortification as the enterprise has gained in worldly wealth; orphaned a number of undertakings which looked to the edification and entertainment of the people of the United States and Canada in the course of coming seasons. He was within a step of the attainment of a position quite without parallel in the history of musical conductors in respect of the scope and influence which would have been opened to his labors, when he died, and this it is that made his death seem so utterly grievous and disastrous. It was a loss not to one community, but to many; not to a single artistic institution, but to art itself.

Mr. Seidl's activities in New York compassed twelve seasons. He came in the fall of 1885, to be the first conductor of the German opera, then domiciled at the Metropolitan Opera House, and he remained at the head of that notable institution until Messrs. Abbey & Grau and their Italian cohorts overthrew the German *régime* in 1891. When his labors ended at the opera, they began with the Philharmonic Society. Mr. Theodore Thomas, who had long been the conductor of the society, went to Chicago in 1891, and Mr. Seidl became his successor at the beginning of the season 1891–92. In that season performances in Italian were resumed at the Opera, and Mr. Seidl's labors were confined to the concert-room. So they were during the season of 1892–93, when the destruction of the interior of the Metropolitan Opera House made operatic representations impossible. In the next two seasons Mr. Seidl conducted the Sunday-night concerts given by Messrs. Abbey & Grau, but the director's desk at the Opera House did not know him till German was added to the official operatic languages, in the fall of 1895. Then he again became a Metropolitan Opera conductor, and so remained, extending his labors to London in the spring of 1897, and to Bayreuth in the summer of the same year. He was under contract to conduct the representations of Wagner's lyric dramas in London and New York in the seasons of 1898 and 1898–1899. But this does not sum up the range of his action. During the entire period of his American residence, he conducted a vast majority of the orchestral concerts given under other auspices than those of the institutions mentioned, and he was extending his activities more and more widely with each year, so that it may correctly be said that, had he lived to carry out the plans which he had laid down for the next season here and abroad, he would have been unique among the world's con-

ductors in the variety and extent of his labors and the reach of his influence. This fact is in itself a proof of the strong personality of the man. Had he been the most skilful master of orchestral and operatic routine in the world, or the most accomplished academician in his field and nothing more, he could not have so impressed himself upon contemporary music, could not have made the need of himself felt in such a degree in two hemispheres.

What manner of man and musician, then, was he? More distinctively than any of his colleagues, even those whose training was like unto his, a product of the tendencies given to reproductive art by Richard Wagner. He represented those tendencies in all their aspects, positive and negative, creative and destructive, progressive and regressive. In all the things wherein his greatness lay, he was the embodiment of an authority which asked no justification and brooked no denial. Outside his specific field he was an empiric—one of a noble sort like Wagner himself, indeed, but an empiric nevertheless. He had no patience with theories, but a wondrous love for experiences. In him, impulse dominated reflection, emotion shamed logic. It was much to his advantage that he came among an impressionable people with the prestige of a Wagnerian oracle and archon, and much to the advantage of the cult to which he was devoted that he made that people "experience" the lyric dramas of his master in the same sense that a good Methodist "experiences" religion, rather than to "like" them. He was a young man when he came, but he had been for six years the musical secretary of Wagner and a member of his household. Before then he had studied at the Leipsic Conservatory, and afterwards worked in a modest capacity at the Vienna Opera. In Budapest he came under the eyes of Hans Richter, who sent him to Wagner to perform

the duties which had once been his. During all the preparations for the first Bayreuth festival, he was one of the poet-composer's executive officers. He participated in the artistic management of the stage during the performances of 1876, and afterward conducted the preliminary rehearsals for the concerts which Wagner gave in London and elsewhere in the hope of recouping himself for the losses made at the festival. Naturally, when he came to New York he was looked upon as a repository of Wagnerian tradition—a prophet, priest, and paladin.

It was not given to Mr. Seidl's friends to observe traces of his academic training except as they may have been preserved in his skill at the pianoforte. He was, by open confession—so, at least, do I interpret some of his sayings—what the Germans call a *Naturalist*. His branch of musical practice was the reproductive, and he believed conducting to be an art which in its truest estate could be acquired only by plenary inspiration. It is commonly said that he was first a pupil of Hans Richter in the art, but he never said so himself. On the contrary, he said publicly that Richter had become a conductor without lessons, and that, though he had made earnest studies of Beethoven and Wagner with Richter, he had never troubled himself with technical practice in the manipulation of the bâton. What he learned in this direction he learned chiefly by standing at the side of Wagner, listening for him, and noting the methods which Wagner employed to make his players one with him in understanding, feeling, and aim. Only once have I known him to mention a technical feature of the conductor's art which he deliberately adopted from another's method. He used the Munich Conductor Levi's manner of beating time in recitatives. For the rest, he depended upon himself—his influence at the moment, his knowledge of the music, his consciousness of command over

men. The first essential in conducting he held to be complete devotion to the music in hand. The conductor must penetrate to the heart of the composition and be set aglow by its flames. That done, he must make his proclamation big and vital, full of red blood, sincere and assertive—assertive even in its misconceptions. He had no room in his convictions for mere refinement of nuance or precision of execution. Too much elaboration of detail he thought injurious to the general effect.

These beliefs were entirely consistent with his tastes, temperament, and training, all of which were largely, perhaps one might say hugely, dramatic. His heart went out to music which told a story or painted a picture, and in the presentation of such compositions he became all-compellingly eloquent. Sometimes, too, he found picturesque elements in most unexpected places, as, for instance, in the variations which make up the last movement of Brahms's symphony in E minor. As a rule, Brahms's music lay beyond the horizon of his sympathies, but this tremendous Passacaglia seemed to warm him, and he read it better than he did anything else of him who was the master symphonist of his age.

Despite his belief that an ounce of gift outweighed a pound of schooling in the art which he practised, and that finish in detail was wholly subordinate to general effect, nothing was plainer to the careful observer of Mr. Seidl's recreative processes (for such all of his readings were) than that it was his knowledge of the potency of details, and his capacity for lifting those of essential value into prominence, upon which his superb triumphs depended. As a master of climax, I have never met his equal; and he attained his climaxes, in which the piling of Pelion on Ossa by other men was exceeded, by the most patient and reposeful accumulation of material, its proper

adjustment, and its firm maintenance in popular notice when once it had been gained. The more furious the tempest of passion which he worked up, the more firmly did he hold the forces in rein until the moment arrived when they were to be loosed, so that all should be swept away in the *mêlée*. None of his *confrères* of Bayreuthian antecedents can work so directly, so elementally, upon an audience as did he. With him in the chair, it was only the most case-hardened critic who could think of comparative *tempi* and discriminate between means of effect. As for the rest, professional and layman, dilettante and ignorant, their souls were his to play with so they were at all susceptible to the kind of music which he preached as an evangel. Puissant as he was when conducting *Fidelio*, or putting a symphony or opera "through the Wagnerian sieve"—as Albert Niemann once described the process to which he had subjected *La Juive*, much to the vitalization of the old French work—he was transfigured when he conducted *Parsifal* or *Tristan und Isolde*.

And now for some purely personal and individual impressions of the man. Anton Seidl was one of those strong characters that give an interesting tinge to all manner of incidents with which they chance to be associated, even though they be of themselves commonplace. Like Moltke he could hold his tongue in seven languages, but singularly enough his habitual taciturnity never made his company any the less interesting. Moreover, when the mood was on him he could talk "an hour by his dial"; and then his reminiscences of the years spent in the household of Wagner, or the story of his experiences while carrying the gospel of the poet-composer through Europe were full of fascination. But the talkative mood seldom came upon him when surrounded by a crowd. He was indifferent to the many and fond of the few, and so his circle of really intimate

friends never grew large in spite of the multitudes who sought and obtained his acquaintance. No combination of circumstances could disturb his self-possession, yet he seemed to be most contented and comfortable when seated quietly "under four eyes," as the Germans say. Even under such circumstances he would sometimes sit for minutes at a time without speaking himself or expecting a word from his companion, yet never show a sign of weariness or *ennui*. In this respect he was something like Schumann, of whom it is told that once he spent an hour with a charming young woman to whom he was fondly attached without uttering a word. Knowing his peculiarities she, too, remained silent and was rewarded for her self-restraint by his speech at parting, which was to the effect that the hour had been one in which they had understood each other wholly and perfectly. Mr. Seidl's hero, Wagner, was the antipodes of Schumann in this respect, and there is a story which indicates that he must frequently have been amused at his pupil's reticence. Coming to a rehearsal he found that Seidl had contracted a cold that had robbed him of every vestige of voice. Wagner laughed immoderately and with mock seriousness upbraided him for his bad habit of talking too much which had now brought him to the pass that he could not talk at all.

His epistolary habits were like his conversation. He wrote as seldom as he talked, but as the talking fit sometimes seized him so did the writing fit. Then he could devote hours to a letter which had the dimensions and sometimes also the style of a formal literary essay. In this kind of writing he was so prone to drop into a pulpit manner that I once taxed him with it and jokingly asked for an explanation. He paused for a moment then smilingly made a sort of half confession that he had once been destined for the priesthood. His fondness for Scriptural illustra-

tions and his "preachy" manner were habits which had clung to him from that early day. They were the only academic relics about him, however. I doubt if any of his friends ever heard him discuss a question in the theory or history of music. How far his exact knowledge in the art went I shall not undertake to determine; one thing is certain, it embraced every measure of Wagner's greater works.

He seldom spoke of his conservatory days at Leipsic and then generally in a tone of amusement. One day I complimented him on his pianoforte playing, and he replied, laughingly: "Oh! I made quite a stir at a conservatory examination once with Mendelssohn's *Rondo Capriccioso*. I was to be a pianist." That he might have been moulded into a virtuoso can easily be believed, for without paying much attention to the graces of pianoforte playing he had a remarkable command of those tone qualities that are so helpful in expressive playing. He was always eloquent at the instrument when playing excerpts from Wagner's great dramas, and several times when he played the illustrations for my lectures I found it almost impossible to proceed with the discourse after he had played the music accompanying the death of Tristan, or the funeral march from *Die Götterdämmerung*. His pianoforte expositions were peculiarly full and orchestral owing to the fact that he did not confine himself to pianoforte arrangements, but preferred to play from the orchestral score, which he had at his fingers' ends. That he appreciated the importance of adjusting method to media he exemplified once at a rehearsal which he gave to a pianist who had to be called to my assistance suddenly because he had unexpectedly been summoned to duty at the opera. The pianist and I were familiar with Mr. Seidl's *tempi* and one or the other gave expression by look or word to surprise when he urged that one

excerpt be played considerably faster than it came from his bâton at the opera. He answered the query sententiously: "Nie langweilig werden am Klavier!" ("You should never grow tedious at the pianoforte!")

As an evidence of his reticence touching his thoughts, feelings and intentions, I wish, in conclusion, to offer a story, though it has a personal bearing. Fully three years before his death I discovered that he had developed a desire to compose. For that alluring department of music, composition, I did not think he possessed any large measure of qualification. I was therefore not a little surprised to have him, after hours of general conversation, ask me for a libretto. I told him of a book of words that I had planned and carried out, in part, on a subject drawn from Norse mythology; but I had a dramatic ballad in mind, not an opera, and, though he asked it, I declined the costly and difficult undertaking of putting together an opera book. Long afterward I learned, but not from him, that he had turned his thoughts to an aboriginal American subject, and wanted to essay what he described as an "American Nibelungenlied." I had suggested the Iroquois legend of Hiawatha—not that treated by Longfellow, but the story which has a basis of history and connects Hiawatha with the foundation of the Confederacy of the Five Nations. He appealed to Francis Nielson, who wrote the book for him. All this without a hint of his intentions to me. In the fall of 1897 we met in Cleveland, he being on a concert, I on a lecture tour. He asked for some specimens of Indian music, and I sent him a large number selected because of their illustration of the characteristic elements of Indian melody and rhythm. We talked them over afterward, but he gave no sign of the fact that he was working on an Indian opera.

BY F. N. R. MARTINEZ

ANTON SEIDL is dead. He was the foremost interpreter of the works of Richard Wagner. He had lived in the master's intimacy, he had studied him and his works in the close communion of the family circle; he had been taught by him with affection; he had been trusted by him. In a sense Seidl was the art legatee of Wagner. The bequest he had received was the mission to propagate the doctrine of modern development in music, as promulgated by Wagner in his music dramas. He had been Wagner's pupil; he was to be his disciple. He fulfilled his task. The new evangel of music he preached has become the universal faith. Others have worked by his side, but in America he was the dominant and controlling force. He died in the plenitude of his powers, with honors crowding upon him. His future was fraught with added fame. If he had regrets they must have been softened by the consciousness that he had been true to his creed, and had helped to make the world better and happier. His domestic life was happy. He was reserved, taciturn, serious in his public relations. In the intimacy of his friends he became expansive. He had wit, humor, breadth of view, catholicity of opinion. He loved nature. In his mountain home—his cottage on one of the Catskill slopes—he was most contented. He loved America, but he adored his native Hungary. He was a patriot. His death is a calamity.

Among the four or five men who may be said to have been determinate factors in the forming and development of the musical culture of the United States, Anton Seidl stands preeminent. Carl Bergmann, Theodore Thomas, Leopold Dam-

rosch, William Gericke and Arthur Nikisch have each done much to build up and better the public taste for the best in music. To the latter two the country owes its possession of one of the finest executive musical bodies in existence. Bergmann and Thomas were the pioneers in the field of symphonic music. The latter was the first to sow the seeds of an appreciation of what was then the "music of the future," and is now accepted as the dominant principle in musical art. Dr. Damrosch followed, and in his too brief career he gave further impetus to the artistic trend of the community's studies. But it was Seidl who finally fixed the attitude of this country towards Wagner and made America an influence and a controlling factor in the conflict of views which may now be said to be ended.

When Seidl was brought to America and placed in a position of responsibility at the head of the Metropolitan Opera House, the public was in a prepared state. Everything depended upon the new man; his task was a difficult one. In brief, it was to preach and proclaim the gospel of Wagner, to expose and develop the principles involved in the doctrine, to give authoritative interpretations of its spirit, to make clear its emotional purport, its moral and ethical significance, its universality.

The task was one of extreme danger. Wagnerism was then considered a fad. Its devotees were few, its detractors were many. The doctrines were new, radical, revolutionary. They seemed to be destructive. They were denounced as formulations of musical anarchy. A weak man, a timid man, an opportunist, placed in Seidl's position might have killed the growing taste in America. The harvest might have been ruined, and the work of the pioneers who had cleared the ground, ploughed it and sown the seeds, might have been all in vain.

But Seidl was neither a weak nor a timid man. He was sin-

cere, loyal and armed with conviction. His creed was broad and firmly planted. His purpose was strong and clearly defined. He had knowledge, sympathy and power. He was a vigorous man, born to command. His personality was positive and magnetic. He became the man of the hour.

His success commenced with the first wave of his conductor's bâton. On that memorable night in November, 1885, when, with characteristic New World hospitality, he was welcomed to the conductor's seat in the orchestra pit of the old Metropolitan Opera House, a new epoch in the history of music in America was inaugurated. Seidl was immediately accepted for his originality, his strength and his authority. The Wagnerites rallied around him. The disciple had been found, the prophet was here. Societies of propagation were formed. Some took the name of the master, others that of the missionary. The propaganda was pursued with energy through the channels of Art, of Literature and of Society.

It would all have been futile, though, had there not been the practical demonstrations by Seidl to convince the doubters, to conquer the indifferent and to fortify the enthusiasts.

Since then the career of the dead maestro has coincided with the progress of musical culture in America. New York has become one of the great musical centres of the world. Seidl in death is recognized as one of the foremost of modern musicians.

The span of Seidl's career was a short one. It barely extended over a quarter of a century. It really began in the autumn of 1872. The young Hungarian had only been a student up to that time—in his native Budapest, at the Leipsic Conservatory, and later in the intimacy of Hans Richter's circle. Then came Richter's recommendation of his pupil to Wagner.

Seidl, young, full of enthusiasm, feeling himself called to be a warrior in a crusade for art, went to the master and became one of his most devoted followers.

Wagner recognized in him the spirit and determination of a man bound to conquer and to control. He found that his young disciple needed but little instruction. Seidl seemed to divine Wagner's ideas by intuition. In a short time the young secretary had become an associate. He was constantly at Wagner's side, in his absolute confidence. He became one of the prominent members of that celebrated circle of keen, intellectual and brilliant men that gathered at Bayreuth. Wagner gave up the enormous details of his work and intrusted Seidl with them. It was Seidl who developed Wagner's plans in the orchestration of his giant scores.

When Wagner undertook to give a series of concerts in London, it was Seidl who was sent ahead to direct the rehearsals. Seidl learned all that Wagner taught him, "not," as he once explained, "by pedantic lessons, but through daily, constant and intimate musical intercourse with the German genius." He soon knew every one of the music-dramas note by note. His education was not kept in a narrow lane. Wagner taught him to share his admiration for Beethoven, Mozart, Weber, and some of the great French composers.

To this day Seidl's readings of Wagner's scores are accepted as unimpeachable. They were derived from the composer himself and have never been criticised.

The time came when Seidl wished—and Wagner approved him in the wish—for independent activity. A recommendation from Bayreuth sufficed, and Seidl was appointed conductor at the Leipsic Stadt Theatre.

It is a coincidence that Seidl's associate was Arthur Nikisch,

who subsequently did his share in the work of elevating musical taste in America.

There was a roving vein in Seidl's nature, and after a few years of routine he was ready to travel. It was then that Seidl was asked to go along with Angelo Neumann, the manager who determined to carry the banner of Wagner into the camps of the enemy. Seidl accepted, and with a well-equipped company the greatest of all musical crusades was started. To all parts of Germany these missionaries travelled, then to Holland, to England, and finally to Italy—the home of the antithesis of Wagner's music. The success of this propaganda was enormous.

Then came a period of rest. Seidl went to Bremen and became the conductor of the opera house in that sober, staid and blue-lawed old Hanseatic town. There he married Fräulein Kraus, a singer of talent, an artist of high qualities, a popular favorite. His wife did not remain long on the stage after her marriage, but devoted herself to domesticity. The married life of the two beings was a happy one. Its felicity was strengthened by the common love of music. The brilliant artist became a model "Hausfrau."

It was in 1885 that Seidl came to America. Since then his career has been so actively connected with everything musical here that he has ever been in the public eye. For five seasons he was the arbiter of the Metropolitan Opera House, and he made that temple of music one of the most famous in the world. Then came the restoration of Italian opera—in 1891–1892—and Seidl retired. When Messrs. Abbey and Grau determined to include German opera in their scheme of performances, they logically engaged Mr. Seidl to conduct them.

Seidl was an interesting personality. His physical characteristics were individual. His face was clean-shaven; his fea-

tures seemed chiselled; his hair, long and glossy, was combed back from his forehead and temples and fell on his shoulders. He bore a marked facial resemblance to Liszt—a fact which oft gave a romantic turn to the gossip in certain circles. He was a severe-looking man, stern in expression, with very little mobility of features.

In public he was not genial, not diplomatic. He had little care for the conventions, or for the amenities of public occasions. He never smiled at the prima donna when she sang an aria at a concert and was wildly applauded. It might be Melba, or Nordica, or Calvé. They were all alike to him. He never shook hands with a soloist after a well-executed solo, even if the artist was a celebrity—Paderewski, Joseffy or Ysaye.

At home, though, or in the "Bierstube," or at his favorite café, he shed his reserve, his crust of indifference. He then became another man entirely, fond of humor, interested with catholicity in all the affairs of the world, convivial and contented. He was not quick of speech nor was he fluent. His style was apt to be laconic, precise, a little bit pedantic at times. He often said that he had been destined and had studied for the priesthood, and that he had never been able to outlive some of the influences of his seminarist days.

He was an ardent Hungarian at heart. He could be roused from his usual quiet by bringing the conversation to a discussion of his native country. Then he would gladly descant on the glories of the land, the heroism of the men, the beauty of the women.

He had become an American citizen and his affection for his adopted country was sincere, although it was not an essential in his emotional make-up. He believed in the musical future of America. He was confident that great composers in numbers

would appear. He favored opera in English. Six or seven years ago he was quoted as saying that " no satisfactory results can be achieved here, nor can America produce any national music until opera is given in English. I look forward to the time when American composers shall produce great operatic works of a distinctly original character, written in the vernacular; but until that time comes I believe that such foreign works as are performed here should be translated into English. The achievements of such American composers as Prof. J. K. Paine, who has done admirable work; of E. A. MacDowell, whose compositions seem to me superior to those of Brahms; of G. W. Chadwick, Templeton Strong and others, augur well for the future productions of American composers."

In a way Seidl always looked the German student. He was simple in his dress. Black broadcloth in the city, white linen in the country. A soft alpine hat in informal hours; a silk hat when ceremony was necessary.

He lived well. He was fond of good food, with a leaning for the cuisine of Germany. The highly-spiced dishes of his own country's gastronomy were not necessities for him. His daily life was methodical. When not busy at rehearsals or concerts, he sat in his home, with his smoking-jacket and slippers. He always had friends around.

For many years he was forced by his duties at the Brighton Beach concerts to live at the seashore. This was not to his liking. He preferred the mountains, the rarefied air, the silence, the broad expanse of scenery. He had bought for himself a cottage in the Catskills—a lovely place to rest, known to his friends as " Seidl Berg." He hastened there whenever he had the leisure. In midsummer, if possible; if not, in May or in early autumn. His drawing-room was a veritable temple of

music. Over the piano hung a portrait of Wagner, and it seemed to dominate the whole apartment. Other masters in wreath-entwined frames, a bust of Beethoven, precious autographs preserved under glass, rare scores with composers' dedications on their fly-leaves, bronze medals commemorating events in the history of music, and flowers in every nook and corner, for both host and hostess loved color and fragrance.

Through the window the eye rested on hills that seemed to fade away and merge in the distant horizon. From the "piazza," as Seidl called it, giving the word its Italian accent, the dense woods, the glorious mountains, refreshed and satisfied every longing for a bit of nature.

It was here on this piazza, in indolent ease, that Seidl passed his happiest hours. He was fond of dogs, and he had many. All were pets, who bore the names of the heroes of the Nibelungen. There was Mime and Hunding and Fricka, but the favorite was Wotan. He was a big St. Bernard, with a soft coat of white-and-golden fur—as intelligent as the best of his breed. He had privileges that none other had. He was permitted to jump and place his forepaws on his master's shoulders and caress him to his heart's content.

Seidl was not "a woman's man," and yet few men have more completely swayed their emotions. It was the musician who worked the spell, and when he laid down his bâton and his music was hushed, all was over. No one made the phrases of Wagner so irresistible. The passion of the love duet in *Tristan and Isolde*, its expression in music of longings, of unsatisfied desires, of yearning souls and panting bodies fairly throbbed when given life by the magic of Seidl's interpretation. The heroic resignation of Brünnhilde when Wotan punishes her sin with a sleep that may be eternal; the joy of her renascense under

the breath-giving kiss of the fearless youth; the fury when the drugged Siegfried denies her, and the sublimity of her self-immolation when her hero has passed away—to all these phases of Wagner's heroine Seidl gave such depth, such impressiveness, that women wept. And the sweetness of Sieglinde, the fascination which Vanderdecken exercises on simple Senta, the maidenhood of Elsa; and, to turn to the heroes, the youthful glory of Siegfried, the fatefulness of Tristan, the spirituality of Lohengrin —all, illuminated by him, touched this or that emotion in the heart of woman and chained her to his chariot.

Seidl's death was dramatic. Friends were waiting at his home —great artists all, Ysaye, Gerardy and Pugno—to share his good cheer. They waited in vain, for at his favorite nook, overlooking the bustle of busy Broadway, he had been stricken. He was a man of nerve and refused to give in. He went his way and Death followed. He closed his eyes surrounded by his associates—his own musicians.

BY AUGUST SPANUTH

IT was a red-letter day in the history of music in America, that 23rd of November, 1885, when Anton Seidl for the first time wielded his bâton at the Metropolitan Opera House in the City of New York. The air was pregnant with expectation when his finely-cut head appeared at the conductor's stand, and from the very moment he raised his right arm in that graceful and inimitable manner until the last note of the *Lohengrin* music had died away, the large audience sat spellbound. And again we sat spellbound, but this time by grief, when, at the same place on the 31st day of March, 1898, a cata-

falque had been erected where on other occasions the conductor's stand was situated, and, covered with flowers, a coffin was to be seen containing all that was mortal of Anton Seidl. Death had come too sudden and too soon; a light had been extinguished too unexpectedly to allow this great congregation of mourners to fully realize the loss which had been inflicted upon all. The orators delivered what they had to say with a sobbing breath; the musicians played the funeral music in a half-hearted, far-away mood; the friends of the dead master longed in vain to give way to consoling tears; but the general gloom made the whole ceremony all the more impressive.

For nearly thirteen years Anton Seidl had been the very centre of musical life in the great metropolis of the New World, and, while everybody was more or less aware that he had brought with him into this country a novel and loftier spirit of musical conception, nobody had thought it possible that his mission could have been ended so soon. At the height of life his mental energy had shown no trace of abatement, and only this very last season he had given such proofs of nervous endurance and working power that they made one completely overlook the changes which his external appearance had undergone during the last six months. And even now—after we have had sufficient time to accommodate our thoughts to the impossibility of ever seeing again this commanding personality leading an orchestra—we shall find it a difficult task to do full justice to the work he has done here, and to define the position he will hold in the musical history of this country. One thing, however, is sure; the remembrance of his work will never be wiped out among us, and it will also bear fruit in generations to come.

Anton Seidl came to us as the prophet of a new art of musical interpretation, and therefore his American career has not

been unlike that of a conquering hero. His successes were like victories—partly over the conservatism, partly over the indifference of the musical masses. And it was comparatively easier for him to stir up the indifferent ones than to convince those who had built up for themselves a certain taste and judgment as to musical matters, and who had worshipped as best they knew how at the altar of Apollo for many years. To them Anton Seidl would appear at first as a revolutionist that tried to throw over the eternal laws of the beautiful in art; that endeavored to smash with his barbarian emotionality the cast-iron traditions sanctioned by the very disciples of the great classic masters. And so, in a lesser degree, Anton Seidl had to overcome similar obstacles as his great master, Richard Wagner, ran against when, in his works, he defied all traditions. Of course, Seidl's struggle was so much less trying, as a reproductive artist is essentially smaller than a productive one. And, furthermore, the American public was not wholly unprepared for the genius of Wagner at the time Seidl arrived here, while the German public knew almost nothing about Wagner and his style when *Lohengrin* was given the first performance through Franz Liszt in Weimar.

The first impressions Seidl made upon the New York public as a conductor were more of the startling than of the convincing order. It did not take the larger part of the critics and a goodly portion of the general public very long to grow enthusiastic over his wonderful accomplishments as a leader, and some of them saw in him at once a sort of demigod. There were three factions in musical New York. The first one claimed Seidl's superiority to all living conductors and declared him infallible; another faction was ready to acknowledge his interpretation of Wagner's dramatic works as unparalleled, but denied him

that universal superiority as a leader; the third faction, however, labored hard to find fault with all his readings and occasionally went even so far as to belittle Wagner because Seidl was the prophet of the master of Bayreuth. It is gratifying to state that in the course of years the views of all of them have broadened in the same degree as Seidl found occasion to display his talents and at the same time to show the limits of his versatility; and at the present time there are probably few that are still inclined to over- or under-rate the services he has lent to the development of our musical life.

As the sage Solon said, nobody should be called happy before his death. Whether a premature and unexpected death is to be considered as the gift of a benevolent God might remain a question to be answered only by individual opinion. But aside from this Anton Seidl's life can safely be called from nearly every point of human view a happy one. It is irrelevant to argue that still greater things might have been expected from this man if circumstances had been more favorable and his life had been a longer one. Fate allowed him to make his mark, and it is after all less lamentable to bury some unfulfilled hopes with the deceased than to see him die after all hope of usefulness has vanished. The loss of Anton Seidl was a great one, but there is a good deal of consolation in the work he has done among us. He has not lived in vain.

Anton Seidl was still more fortunate in gaining access to Wahnfried and becoming his master's personal friend. It was a great time at Bayreuth, those four years of preparation for the first performances on the wonderful and unique stage of the Festspielhaus. It certainly was a time full of excitement and enthusiasm for the fight *pro* and *contra;* the principle of the new music-drama was just on the point of its culmination. No

wonder, therefore, that the impressions Seidl received in those years proved to be enduring with him. Not only that he was every day under the constant influence of so overpowering a personality as Richard Wagner; that he became familiar with all the details of the miraculous scores of the Nibelungen; that he gained an insight of the mystical manner in which his master formed and developed the ideas given him by divine inspiration, a process ordinarily termed composing; he had, also, an opportunity to meet, in Wagner's house, scores of renowned artists—painters, poets, musicians, singers, instrumentalists—who all gathered there to pay homage to the great reformer of dramatic music.

It is indeed not to be wondered at that, under such conditions, Anton Seidl finally began to Wagnerize all and everything. We all have to pay for it when we live too near the gods. Even up to his very last appearances in public, Anton Seidl was censured by some critics for his reading of classical symphonies; and, while there might have been some reason for it to a certain extent, it cannot detract the least little bit from his reputation as one of the greatest orchestral leaders we have ever had.

Wagner and Liszt had fairly revolutionized the art of conducting. It is well to remember that, in the orchestra of former days, it was the leader of the first violinists who took upon himself to guide his fellow-musicians safely through an intricate rhythm, or some other difficulty that might arise in the score, by occasionally beating the time with his bow. By-and-by, as orchestral scores became more varied and complicated in rhythm and otherwise, it was found necessary to have this leader do nothing else but beat the time. And as soon as beating the time had become his only occupation, the leader gradually grew more anxious to control not only the rhythm and the tempo, but the light and

shade also, and finally held himself, and was held responsible, for the whole performance. This was the first step to an emancipation of the rigid rules of tradition, but it did not lead to that immediately. Up to the time of Wagner and Liszt, in fact, nobody dared to enter through the door that was, practically, thrown open to the development of individuality in reproductive art; and nearly all that has been accomplished by the conductors of the elder school never went beyond correctness, smoothness and delicacy of execution. One cannot be better enlightened upon this subject than through reading Wagner's book "Ueber das Dirigiren."

Wagner taught that not only the demands of post-classical composition involved a different, that is, a more subjective, style of interpretation than the older conductors had indulged in, but he insisted that the Beethoven interpreter also had to go to work with more individual freedom. To bring out the characteristic spirit of a composition in the most characteristic way became the fundamental principle of a thoroughly satisfying reproduction in the modern sense. It was also part of this demand to pay the closest attention to the smallest details, and how much this had been neglected—even by the most conscientious conductors of the old school—was clearly proved when Hans von Bülow, with that mediocre and comparatively small Meiningen orchestra, started on a musical campaign through the principal cities of Germany. Their success was overwhelming.

It appears only natural, under these altered conditions, that most of the new orchestra leaders were less good all-around conductors than specialists, and Anton Seidl was no exception to them. However, the range of his ability was by no means so limited as some of his critics would make us believe. When

he started, a very young man, as Kapellmeister at the Leipsic Stadt-Theater, he felt certainly inclined to conduct everything in the Wagnerian mood, no matter whether an opera by Mozart or by Lortzing was concerned. But his natural musicianship helped him greatly to broaden in his taste, and whoever has heard the French *Faust* performance under his bâton at the Metropolitan Opera House, toward the close of the season '95–'96, will readily admit that Seidl's conception showed his perfect familiarity with the style of the great French master. It would have been very different at the time of Seidl's engagement in Leipsic.

It did not take our public long to recognize Seidl as the coming man. We had grown tired of the old traditional Italian opera and the enthusiastic and energetic Dr. Leopold Damrosch had just succeeded in clearing the field for the German, and more especially for the Wagner opera. Henceforth the public was not wholly unprepared but rather willing to follow the right leader into a new world of dramatic art. Every means were generously furnished to make the performances most brilliant and even gorgeous as to the scenic arrangements. The success was most gratifying and highly remarkable, and foreigners coming to New York were greatly surprised to find an English-speaking audience crowding the vast Metropolitan Opera House night after night and attentively listening to the strange and partly superhuman word and tone pictures inspired by the German mythology. Not the splendid ensemble of singers nor the magnificent scenic display could alone accomplish such a result: it was more than anything else the eloquent way in which the conductor disclosed the mysteries of the scores. His bâton made the music talk: the musical phrases became a language of human feelings and passions universally understood. His influ-

ence upon the musicians in the orchestra was indescribably magnetic, and as to color and climacteric effects nothing like them had been heard here before.

And this was exactly what we needed the most. The public had not been deaf to the sensuous charm of tone color, but it was accustomed to look upon the tonal beauty as a mere decorative though very desirable thing. Now it began to realize the inseparability of sound and thought, and willingly it bent its knees to the spontaneity of the genius of Wagner. Other conductors before Seidl had given us very acceptable renderings of some of Wagner's works, but now one became aware that in spite of their artistic qualities something had been missing.

Though our progress in music had been rapid we were deficient in the appreciation of the emotional elements of tonal art. In his habit of approaching everything at first with his brain and never allowing his feelings to get the better of his judgment our level-headed American had long made a scientific study of music. There is hardly a city of 100,000 and more inhabitants even in the far West where not at least half a dozen baccalaureates and doctors of music dwell and flourish And as to the technical details of execution in all the different musical branches, there can hardly be found a race more fit to master them than the American. Knowledge and execution, however, do not offer everything necessary to become a real musical being, and if truth goes before politeness one should not hesitate to state that so far the American people have generally been found wanting in those emotional qualities which are the genuine sources of artistic fancy. It is from this point of view that the work Seidl has been doing here should be judged. He was able to arouse enthusiasm even among those who were not particularly musical, for he appealed to them through his tremendous temperament.

Human nature is always touched most vigorously by the display of those qualities in which it is lacking itself.

It was under Seidl's direction that works like *Die Meistersinger*, *Tristan and Isolde*, *Siegfried*, *Götterdämmerung* and *Das Rheingold* were introduced to the American public, and it is to his credit that those stupendous works, so novel and so extraordinary in every way, gained almost instant success in the metropolis. Even in Germany it had taken years before the countrymen of Wagner were ready and able to fully appreciate the intrinsic grandeur of these dramas, while the fickle and blasé audience of our Metropolitan Opera House was conquered in a comparatively short space of time. All the lectures on Wagnerian subjects, all the explanatory programmes and the musical guides could not have brought about this result. Anton Seidl, with his keen and energetic beat and with his tremendous temperament, did it.

In spite of its indisputable success, however, German opera went out of existence in New York after Seidl had carried it from victory to victory during six years. The remaining seven years of his life he devoted mainly to concert work.

Symphonies that did not appeal to his artistic temperament were naturally treated by him with less care and enthusiasm than others; it is, however, very fortunate that it was the most important works of modern composers that were benefited by his efforts. In the Philharmonic concerts, as well as in those of the Brooklyn Seidl Society, he achieved great results with the interpretation of Liszt's, Berlioz's, Tschaikowsky's, and other modern composers' creations. And who will ever forget his conducting of Liszt's Faust, Dvorák's New World, and Tschaikowsky's Pathetic Symphonies?

Furthermore a vast amount of reformatory work was done

by him in the numerous Sunday concerts and in the popular summer concerts at Brighton Beach. The programmes of the latter were unequaled here or abroad as to their richness and variety. If the best modern orchestral music has become popular here it is safe to say that Seidl has done more than any other conductor to make it so.

Anton Seidl did not live among us as a stranger. Unlike most European artists that come to visit us he did not try to make as much money as possible in as short a time as possible and then go back to Europe and enjoy his riches there. No, he went through the necessary process of acclimatization rather quickly and became a real American in thought and life. Even adverse circumstances here and flattering offers from the other side could not induce him to give up his work here. He believed strongly in the musical future of this country and he did whatever he could to encourage young American composers in their sincere endeavors. The money-makers among them, however, could not rely upon his support. The American compositions Seidl performed during the thirteen years of his work would make a long list. But he was not always influential enough to have his own way, and during his last season the Philharmonic Society stubbornly refused to put Harry Roe Shelley's Second Symphony on its programme although Seidl recommended it highly.

Even if Seidl's work had been confined to the city of New York his influence would have been felt all over the United States, but many excursions with his orchestra, with vocal and instrumental soloists and with the Metropolitan Opera company brought him into direct contact with the western world. So New York did not grieve alone over the loss of this great and unique conductor. He made thousands of friends and admirers

and the few he left unconquered were powerless ; they could not interfere with the formidable influence he exercised on the music of this country. And history will be just to him. It will not overlook his shortcomings, which were few, and it will not belittle his merits, which were wonderful and numerous.

BY CHARLES D. LANIER

THIS writer believes, with thousands of others, that Anton Seidl was the greatest interpreter of music that the nineteenth century has produced. It is more generally admitted that he was the first of Wagnerian conductors and that he, more than any other, gave America what it has of the noblest music. This he did with no fury of argument, with no skill in business organization, but merely by virtue of his genius in compelling, inspiring, the sincerest efforts of the musicians beneath his bâton. The hearts of the multitude were moved ; they saw and felt what Wagner, what Beethoven, saw and felt.

The few who had appreciated Wagner's greatness found him vastly greater than they had ever before suspected ; and with this noble, contained figure leading and inspiring the orchestra to the very heights of passion and tenderness, of love and despair, real music found its way to the hearts of thousands whom the works of Beethoven and Mozart, great as they were, had failed to move. When the emotional side of his audience had been once stirred, the fine poetic figure of Anton Seidl added to the charm. Not tall, but of commanding presence, with masterly, sure gestures, most noble in their simplicity and reserve ; his strongly chiseled features firm set in grave beauty ; a magnificent mane of silky hair like that of Liszt—his face and

form were in such rare keeping with the music of the gods that the appeal of his reserve was more powerful than any effect attained by those conductors who are intoxicated into a fury of gesture. To have heard his orchestra in the Vorspiel of *Tristan* is to have at hand for one's lifetime a world of poetry to which the gate is opened at the thought of Seidl's uplifted hand and brow. It is strange enough to observe the variety of minds who were captivated by him. The most cynical of men, to whom music, before they knew Seidl, meant merely a plaything for women and womanish men, repaired night after night to the Metropolitan and spent ecstatic hours. He was, on the other hand, worshipped of women, notwithstanding his exceeding reserve; the most sentimental school-girl and the largest and finest mind alike accepted him as a hero, because he appealed to the truth in both of them. The musicians, too, adored him. He was modest and, in his quiet, unprotesting way, most kindly. He seemed undeniably one of the elder men, one who could "speak and be silent." His worth was best recognized by the very greatest of his peers, Wagner, Liszt, and Richter, and de Reszke, Lehmann and Alvary. De Reszke refused to sing *Tristan* unless Seidl was the conductor.

Aside from his activities as leader of the Philharmonic Seidl conducted a regular series of concerts under the management of the Seidl Society of Brooklyn, and of an evening in the hot season led his musicians in a large pavilion at Brighton Beach, where the thunder of the Valkyrie and of Walhalla was mingled with the roar of the waves which dashed against the walls of the concert hall. His earnings from these many engagements were not large. The perfect outlines of a perfect artist's life were not broken in Seidl's career by the cares of building up a fortune. Indeed, he would scarcely have made a "business

success;" it is said that more than once he returned his check to a manager who had not realized a fair profit.

The total effect of Seidl's work in America was to arouse here such an enthusiasm for dramatic music as was utterly unknown before him. He became the hero of the music-loving people of the country. The inspiration he gave was not at all confined to New York City and Brooklyn, for it became the fashion for persons of musical tastes in the West and South to come to New York or Chicago for the opera season. People of all classes in the country seized on any holiday or other opportunity to come to the city during the opera and concert season, and carried back to their homes an enduring recollection of the great orchestral leader and a new capacity for the highest enjoyment of music.

BY HENRY T. FINCK

THE SECRET OF SEIDL'S SUCCESS

TWENTY thousand persons, it is said, attended the funeral of Beethoven. Wagner, Brahms and other modern composers had great honors paid to them when they lay in their coffins; but it is doubtful if any musician who was not a creator of new works, but simply an interpreter, ever was so imposingly honored in his death as Anton Seidl. For nearly a week every metropolitan journal devoted a column a day, and, on the Sunday following his death, a whole page to the great conductor and his sudden death. More than ten thousand applications were made for tickets to the memorial services at the Metropolitan Opera House, though only four thousand had room in it; and while the services were in progress Broadway, for half a dozen

blocks or more, was one surging mass of people. No statesman or general could have been more lamented, no poet or philanthropist more wept over, than was Anton Seidl. "His funeral was more impressive than any music drama I ever saw or heard at Bayreuth," wrote my friend, James Huneker; and that was my feeling too. I have never seen so many men and women weep in public as on this occasion, when Tschaikowsky's Adagio Lamentoso and Siegfried's Death from *Die Götterdämmerung* were played, and all eyes were riveted on the flower-decked coffin.

Why did Anton Seidl's death thus stir the musical multitude? Why did so many weep over him? For a man of his eminence he had not many personal friends. He was not affable, he shunned society, he was taciturn and shy in the presence of all but his most intimate friends. The great public knew his personality only through his art, but through that art they knew that it was a great personality. As an interpreter he always laid bare the heart of an art-work, and he always reached the heart of the hearers. Not many weeks before he died, at an Astoria concert, he played the same Adagio Lamentoso that was selected for his funeral, and played it with such heartrending pathos that half the audience was in tears. I mentioned this fact to an acquaintance who rarely goes to a concert. He smiled incredulously and said he did not believe that anyone ever wept at a concert. His curiosity, however, was aroused, and he secured seats for the next Seidl concert. I did not see him, but he frankly confessed afterwards that while Mr. Seidl was conducting the slow movement of Dvořák's New World Symphony his companion wiped away her tears, and that his own eyes had a film over them. Several members of the orchestra have told me that on such occasions Mr. Seidl himself used to be so

deeply affected that tears rolled down his cheeks. The usual expression on his face during a performance was what Colonel Ingersoll has finely called "impassioned serenity."

Czerny wrote concerning Beethoven's playing that "frequently not an eye remained dry, while many would break out into loud sobs; for there was something wonderful in his expression." Anton Seidl had this gift of expression, this power of evoking tears, which usually belongs only to creative geniuses; and therein lay the secret of his popularity. He had his dry half-hours as a matter of course. An antiquated work like some of Mozart's symphonies, or the first two of Beethoven's, did not arouse his sympathy, wherefore his performance of it left the audience cold; but if he had before him music that stirred him, he always stirred the audience with it. I have heard nearly all the great conductors of our time perform Beethoven's symphonies, but I have never heard the seventh and the ninth played with such marvelous clearness of detail, such depth and variety of expression, as under his bâton. The third *Leonore* overture was another of his Beethoven specialties. He made of it what Wagner called it—a drama complete in itself; and I have heard him conduct it at the Metropolitan Opera House with such fire and dramatic passion that even the box-holders, who seldom paid any attention to the orchestra, burst out into prolonged applause.

Among the tributes telegraphed from abroad none was more significant than that of Jean de Reszke, which spoke of Anton Seidl as "the greatest of all Wagner conductors"—doubly significant because that great tenor had just been singing Wagner under Hans Richter at St. Petersburg. It was owing to this same tenor—the greatest of our time—that Anton Seidl was restored to the Metropolitan Opera House after the temporary

eclipse of Wagner. He made this restoration a condition of his appearing in certain rôles. He studied these rôles with Seidl, just as Niemann, the greatest dramatic tenor of his time, studied them with him when he came to America. He had had a much longer experience with some of these rôles than his conductor had, but he felt that Seidl had a knowledge of the scores which he could have obtained only at first hand from the composer.

Wagner himself, as we have seen, commended Anton Seidl for having learned preëminently to conduct the orchestra with special reference not only to the singers, but to every minute detail of the action and *mise-en-scène*. Nothing escaped his eye; he took half the responsibility off the shoulders of the singers, enabling them to feel at ease in the most difficult places. Both Niemann and Jean de Reszke told me in succession two things about Seidl almost in the same words. "When I am in the least doubt about a bar I look at Seidl; he always sees me and the word I want is on his lips." "In the third act of *Tristan* I have sometimes almost forgotten to sing on, so absorbed was I by Mr. Seidl's wonderful orchestral eloquence." Lilli Lehmann, Marianne Brandt, Mme. Nordica and many other eminent dramatic singers always spoke of Seidl as their favorite conductor.

As a climax builder Anton Seidl has probably never had an equal. He knew how to thrill even those who did not understand the music in its harmonic details. Col. Robert Ingersoll's great admiration of Seidl was chiefly based on this dynamic faculty. He has told me himself more than once that he is not able to follow the intricacies of a Wagnerian score, yet he never missed a chance to hear a Wagner opera under Seidl, whose dynamic eloquence and art of climaxing stirred every fibre of his soul. Anton Seidl never made a speech in his life, yet he had

the oratorical faculty of Robert Ingersoll, who, indeed, at a Lotos Club dinner once referred to him as "a great orator." No one who has ever heard him build up the climax in the finales of *Lohengrin* (acts first and second), or the love duo in *Tristan,* or Siegfried's departure from Brünnhilde in the second Vorspiel of *Die Götterdämmerung*, or the finale of that drama, can ever hope to hear anything like it again. Yet, dearly as Seidl loved a climax, he was equally admirable in pathetic music—like Brünnhilde's pleading in the last act of *Die Walküre*—or serene music like the forest scene in *Siegfried.* He had indeed a special liking for delicate, dainty music, and when he was able to have sufficient rehearsals, nothing could have been finer than his performances of modern French music. But he was a Hungarian, and what appealed to him particularly was passion, impetuosity, lawless irregularity of tempo, such as prevails in Liszt's music. With him died the greatest of Liszt interpreters; and it is hardly necessary to add that this same Hungarian instinct for change of pace, in accordance with the emotional character of the music, helped to make him the greatest of Wagnerian conductors, for modification of tempo is the soul of Wagnerian interpretation.

Anton Seidl understood the remarkably rare art of pausing at the proper place—an art with which he produced some of his superb oratorical effects. He had no use for a metronome. His sense of tempo—in music that he cared for—was almost infallible. It is well known that Dvořák had the slow movement of the New World Symphony marked andante in the manuscript, but changed it to largo when he heard Seidl, led by a correct instinct, conduct it in that tempo at a rehearsal. A greater compliment has never been paid to any interpreter.

One of the current errors which Anton Seidl swept away

for all time was the notion that Wagner's orchestration is too heavy and drowns the singers. One of Wagner's favorite remarks at the Bayreuth festivals was that "the orchestra should always bear the singer as the agitated sea bears a boat, but without ever putting it in danger of capsizing or sinking." That was the way Anton Seidl treated his orchestra. It never swallowed up the singer's boat, but now lifted it up high on the waves of sound, and again merely lapped the boat with gentle ripples. That was another reason why the singers loved him, and were so eager to have him share the honors of the applause. Time and again the de Reszkes and other great singers hurried behind the scenes to search for the great conductor and drag him on the stage as if to say, "We could not have done half so well had it not been for him." But the audience did not need to be told that. It often continued applauding until Seidl, too, had come on the stage; and when he appeared at his stand he was always greeted with several rounds of applause.

Singers do not like, any more than audiences, to have operas last too long. Anton Seidl had a remarkable faculty of shortening Wagner's operas, not by the reprehensible process of making cuts (though he adopted such as seemed necessary), but by making the music compact, and by accelerating the movement in proper places. He conducted with animation instead of with animosity, like some of his Italian predecessors in Mapleson's days. *Lohengrin*, which others either mutilated mercilessly or prolonged to four hours and a half, he conducted in three hours and a half. Yet he never unduly hurried the tempi; he simply whipped up his team in the proper places, thus gaining time to dwell broadly and lovingly on the slow, stately or tender parts. *Siegfried* he often conducted in three hours and forty minutes, without sacrificing essential parts to the blue pencil.

Of the Wagnerian "rubato," or frequent modification of tempo, Anton Seidl was a consummate master. To it he owed much of his emotional sway over his audiences. It might be said that he applied to the Wagner operas the spirit of Gipsy music, so far as emotional abandon and freedom from artificial metronomic fetters are concerned; and it was by this same method that he achieved such wonderful results with Liszt's music. How important is this principle of incessant modification of tempo may be inferred from the fact that when Richard Wagner personally conducted the first performance ever given in Leipsic of his new Meistersinger Prelude, the audience, which had not come in a friendly spirit (it had not even greeted him when he stepped on the stage!) absolutely insisted on a repetition of it, whereas some time later when a conductor of the old school repeated this overture, with the same orchestra, but in a metronomic tempo, it was hissed. Apply this to a whole opera, and you will see of what importance it was to the Wagnerian cause in America to have such a master of the dramatic rubato as Seidl.

Another secret of his success lay in his ability to bring out the various themes or melodies in the complicated web of orchestral scores with what might be called stereoscopic clearness and vividness. Nothing was ever blurred, every detail had its due importance. Of his unequaled art of climax-building I have already spoken. And what a keen ear he had for tone-coloring! I pity every reader of these pages who never had a chance to hear him conduct the Siegfried Idyl. It is a composition which, carelessly played, can be made positively monotonous. Mr. Seidl made it a perfect kaleidoscope of colors, though it is written only for strings, woodwind and horn, and he dwelt on its delightful miniature work with the joy of a Japanese artist over his cloisonné.

It was a combination of all these qualities that made him the ideal Wagner conductor and that enabled Niemann to express his surprise at the enthusiastic reception of *Tristan* and other Wagner operas in New York. I have before me several letters dated June, 1883, written in Vienna, to urge Mr. Seidl to give another Wagner concert. One of them, written "in the name of a great number of Seidl admirers," begs him, above all things, to conduct once more the Meistersinger Prelude and the Prelude and Finale of *Tristan* because "these pieces can be heard to perfection only when *you and your musicians* give them." The last time he conducted those *Tristan* numbers was at the fifth Philharmonic concert in New York. I cannot refrain from quoting what I wrote at that time:

"For the close Mr. Seidl had reserved one of those exhibitions of interpretative genius with which, like Paderewski, he loves to amaze even his most enthusiastic admirers. *Tristan and Isolde* is one of his specialties in which no living conductor equals him, but even he never conducted the Introduction and Finale as he did yesterday. What is the witchery which enables a great conductor to make 101 orchestral musicians play as if each were a consummate artist and world-famed soloist? Whatever it may be—and it is as great a mystery as all manifestations of genius—Mr. Seidl has it, and he never revealed this gift more thrillingly than yesterday. There was a glow of passion, an uplifting of feeling, an ecstasy of emotion, a richness of color, a gradual approach to, and final consummation of, the climax that were simply overwhelming. For a person with heart disease it would be dangerous to hear such a performance. During the protracted pause between the two parts there was a stillness in the house so remarkable that it seemed as if everybody had stopped breathing. It was like the absolute silence on top of a great mountain, and as a token of pleasure it was infinitely

more eloquent than the outburst of applause at the end."

New Yorkers who became familiar with Wagner's operas through the interpretations of the late Anton Seidl, and afterwards heard Hans Richter in the same operas in Vienna or Bayreuth, were always struck by the remarkable resemblance in their versions. This was not a mere coincidence: Seidl was a pupil of Richter, and both were pupils of Wagner, who handed down through them the correct traditions. The main difference between these conductors lay in this, that Seidl, the younger of the two, was more passionate, more emotional. He was, perhaps, the most emotional conductor that ever lived, especially in the dramatic sphere. Music appealed to him in proportion as it appealed to the feelings. He was sometimes criticised for infusing dramatic feeling into symphonies which had no pictorial programme attached to them, but in doing this he merely followed the spirit of the times, and the musical public was in thorough sympathy with him.

At the end of his splendid essay "On Conducting" (reprinted in this volume) Mr. Seidl says: "One must have heard a Beethoven symphony as interpreted by Wagner to learn how much there is hidden away among the notes of that classic giant, and how much can be conjured out of them." He himself gave Americans many glimpses of these unrevealed secrets. In my account of the first Wagner-Beethoven concert he conducted in New York—for the benefit of the Bayreuth Festival Fund—I find it recorded that "not only was Mr. Seidl called back several times whenever he left the stage, but he had to bow his thanks repeatedly after every movement of the 'Eroica' symphony; and after the great 'Leonore' overture the applause was overwhelming. Indeed, it seemed even more enthusiastic after the Beethoven than after the Wagner numbers."

Why was he so warmly applauded?

It is well known that Beethoven, like Wagner after him, found the metronome a useless encumbrance. He twice provided his Ninth Symphony with metronome marks, but quite differently in the two cases. When his attention was called to this inconsistency he exclaimed: "No metronome! A man who has the right feeling does not need it, the man who has not finds it useless; he and the whole orchestra run away from it." There is also abundant testimony that Beethoven approved of frequent modification of tempo. Seyfried wrote that "he was most particular about expression, the small nuances, the numerous alternations of light and shade, and the frequent passages in tempo rubato." And Schindler said: "What I heard Beethoven play was, with few exceptions, free from all restraint in tempo; it was a tempo rubato in the most proper sense of the word, as conditioned by context and situation." For a long time, however, Beethoven was played in a monotonous, metronomic manner until this method became accepted as the correct "tradition." Wagner knocked that notion in the head with a sledge-hammer, and his pupils, including Anton Seidl, followed his example. Therein lay the secret of his success as a Beethoven conductor.

When it was announced that Mr. Theodore Thomas was going to Chicago, Mr. Seidl's name was naturally suggested first as that of the best available successor as conductor of the Philharmonic Orchestra. A few of its members at first opposed him from fear that he might "Wagnerize" all the music; but they were voted down and the election was made unanimous. Mr. Seidl soon showed that he respected all the great masters and their way, but at the same time he made it clear that the process of "Wagnerizing" any symphony consists in eliminating, as far as possible, the consciousness that the symphony is

descended from *dance* music, and in substituting a *poetic* mode of interpretation, which recognizes the fact that strictly metronomic conducting is as inartistic as it would be for an actor to read all the lines of a Shakespeare monologue in exactly the same time. When Wagner conducted Weber's *Freischütz* overture in Dresden, the critics accused him of "Wagnerizing" that; but the testimony of the older members of the orchestra, and of Weber's widow, was that "that was the way Weber used to play it."

With the first two of Beethoven's symphonies, as I have said before, Mr. Seidl was not specially in sympathy. They are doubtless antiquated, and he probably felt like Wagner, who exclaimed, "Compare the Eighth symphony with the Second and you will be astounded at the entirely new world which faces us in the later work." Yet I have heard him conduct the Second in the serene, unruffled "classical" spirit that becomes it. In his interpretation of the Eroica the funeral march was the most effective part. In the Sixth, or Pastoral, he revealed the fact that the storm is not so primitive, compared with Wagner's and Rubinstein's storm music, as many had fancied. He made it surprisingly tempestuous and stirring. The Seventh he played in a way to almost convince a Wagnerite that Beethoven was as great a master of orchestration as Wagner himself, and he brought out its "delirium of joy" in the last movement in a way to stir the pulse of the most phlegmatic listeners. As for the Eighth, I care not whether Mr. Seidl was right in following Wagner's suggestions as to tempi or not. Coming between two such giants as the Seventh and the Ninth, it seems to me a comparatively weak work, hardly worth all the angry discussion it has given rise to in New York and elsewhere. Of the Ninth I need not speak again. In that Mr. Seidl was acknowledged even by his detractors to be as great as in *Tristan* or *Siegfried*. In this symphony Beethoven

belongs more than half to the romantic school and few would be so obtuse as to deny that to it, at any rate, we must apply Wagner's maxim which might be summed up in these words: "The fact that a piece is marked allegro at the beginning does not mean that it must be played allegro throughout, but if a few bars occur of a pathetic, adagio-like character, the tempo must be retarded momentarily—as an actor or orator retards his speech if the words suggest a modification of the dominant emotion."

One of Mr. Seidl's Wagnerian readings of Beethoven startled even his warmest champions, though they could not help being stirred by it. Near the close of the great Leonore overture he brought out an overwhelming brass climax that suggested the swelling, throbbing chords in the *Tristan* Vorspiel. When I heard this for the first time I said to myself, "A splendid climax, but is it Beethoven?" But when I consulted the score I found that Beethoven had marked this place not with the ordinary fortissimo, but with *fff*, which certainly called for as big a climax as an orchestra can produce. All other conductors had overlooked that.

In reading the "Bear" Symphony, or other works of Papa Haydn, Seidl knew how to reveal the irresistible dance swing and bright humor of that composer. Bach was one of his idols. He transcribed some of his works for modern orchestra and interpreted them with as much zeal as he ever bestowed on Wagner or Liszt. Mozart's operas, especially *Don Juan*, he conducted *con amore*. With Schubert and Schumann he did not appear to be in sympathy when he first came to New York; possibly Wagner's undervaluation of those composers inclined him to carelessness. In later years his attitude changed, and while he seldom equaled Theodore Thomas or Arthur Nikisch in those two masters, I remember one performance

in which he surpassed them. It was Schubert's Variations on "Death and the Maiden," in which, played by the strings of the Philharmonic, he conjured almost as astounding a variety and dazzling beauty of colors as in his favorite Siegfried Idyl. He also knew how, when in the mood for it, to interpret a Schumann symphony with rhythmic vigor and the proper romantic spirit.

Of Brahms he was not a great admirer. Alfred Veit relates this story:

"One day a lady was introduced to Seidl, and begged him to hear her daughter play, as the girl desired to appear in public with the coöperation of the eminent conductor and his orchestra. Seidl listened very graciously to the eulogies which the lady bestowed upon her daughter, and said in his kindest way: "Very well, Madame, I shall be pleased to hear your daughter. What does she play?" "She plays a concerto by Brahms," the lady replied, "and another one by, let me see—," she hesitatingly continued, trying to remember the composer's name. "Well, then, I will hear her play the *other one*," the great conductor replied in his most caustic style, lighting another cigar."

Nevertheless I have heard him interpret Brahms's best work, the second symphony, with the same conscientious care that he bestowed on his favorites and with results that Brahms's special champions do not always attain. Beside Schumann and Brahms there was another composer antagonistic to Wagner, but to whom nevertheless Mr. Seidl always strove to do justice. I have seldom heard anything more stirring than his performances of those two neglected master works, Rubinstein's Dramatic and Ocean Symphonies.

For the Norwegian Grieg he had a special liking, and it was always a delight to hear him play the "Peer Gynt," or other weird, or sad, or sprightly works of that quaintly original

composer. He was so eager to make the public share his delight in certain of Grieg's compositions that he arranged them for orchestra. I remember especially one of these arrangements, a composition entitled "Sounds of Bells," in which the various orchestral groups appear to play in absolutely unrelated keys, producing a peculiar dissonance of harmonics like the overtones of bells loudly rung, but with a deep, musical boom coming in again and again.

He also had a great admiration for the original and romantic American MacDowell, whom he pronounced a greater composer than Brahms. He was always in quest of orchestral novelties. Among the letters addressed to him I have found some from friends whom he had asked to hunt up Spanish or other exotic works for him. In this line his library is unique; and when he could not find what he wanted he would orchestrate piano pieces. To his predilection for the modern French school I have already alluded. The light, airy, delicate nature of this music were specially suited for his small Metropolitan orchestra, and the only objections to his performances of Delibes, Massenet, Berlioz and other French masters was that the audiences so often insisted on encores, which he did not like as a rule. His interpretation of Bizet's *L'Arlesienne* at the Broadway Theatre, a few years ago, was one of the finest things ever heard in New York. The delicate, sentimental and graceful passages in this inspired music were as ideally reproduced by him as the several passionate outbursts that reveal the composer's dramatic power.

That he did not neglect contemporary German music goes without saying. When he produced Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel* at Daly's Theatre, he was hampered by insufficient singers and too small an orchestra. But in his subsequent inter-

pretation of the best numbers of the score in the concert hall, there was something ineffably touching in the ethereal delicacy of the dream music which brought tears to many eyes, while the imposing sonority of the climax was overwhelming. With many conductors a climax means simply noise; with him it was a thrilling effect of cumulative emotion, like that which makes a reader's heart stop beating in the climax of an intensely absorbing story. It was wonderful, often, to see Mr. Seidl communicate his strong emotion, his virility, as well as his delicacy, to an orchestra of a hundred players.

Humperdinck had shared with him the task of teaching Siegfried Wagner, and one of Mr. Seidl's last deeds was to introduce his pupil's symphonic poem "Sehnsucht" to an American audience. He was censured for this on the ground that this work was too juvenile for performance at a Philharmonic concert. Perhaps it was, but if the artistic interest was not specially great, it was a matter of scientific and æsthetic curiosity to know how the son of Wagner and grandson of Liszt would write music. Should he make as great strides in art as his father did—which is not at all impossible—that Philharmonic concert will some day have historic interest.

Under Anton Seidl's bâton Weber's *Euryanthe* had a series of superb performances. It was also his privilege to make America acquainted with the funeral march which Wagner arranged from *Euryanthe* motives at the obsequies of Weber. Wagner thought he had lost the parts of this arrangement, but Seidl found them among his old papers, and it was only just that Frau Wagner should have allowed him to produce this composition at a Philharmonic concert previous to its publication in Germany.

Anton Seid' also contributed his share in helping Gold-

marck to a great temporary success by the way in which he rendered the *Queen of Sheba* (fifteen performances in one season) and *Merlin*. For Italian "prima-donna operas" he naturally did not care, but he admired the later Verdi; and when he conducted Boito's *Mefistofele*, it was the unanimous opinion of the New York critics, even of those not usually friendly to him, that he conducted it as admirably as he did Wagner's works. But enough has been said to illustrate his cosmopolitan gift of interpretation.

In the last years of his life the Hungarian, Slavic, and Scandinavian schools of music seemed to interest him more and more. His last love may be said to have been Tschaikowsky's Pathetic Symphony, which he conducted with more overwhelming passion at every repetition and the poetry of which no other conductor revealed as he did. The last time he played it was at a morning concert in the Astoria Hotel—a performance concerning which I wrote at the time:

"Usually after a concert there are almost as many opinions as there are hearers, but after yesterday's concert there was but one sentiment, summed up in the words, 'Oh, that all my friends had been here!' Mr. Seidl and his men played the Pathetic Symphony of Tschaikowsky as it has never been played, and probably never will be played again, with a heartrending pathos that made many of the ladies in the audience give free vent to their tears, and affected Mr. Seidl himself so deeply that friends who called on him after the performance found him so overcome with emotion as to be almost unable to speak. The orchestra has played that symphony several times lately, and the result showed what Mr. Seidl can do, and what he would do every week if he could have things his own way."

The creation of the Pathetic Symphony was ominous of

Tschaikowsky's death; its performance foreshadowed Anton Seidl's death. The Adagio Lamentoso was also played at his funeral by the Philharmonic Society. The master could no longer conduct it; he lay in his bier in the spot where he used to sway all hearts, but that agonizing fact added the poignancy of grief to the music which his genius used to press on it, and made the tears flow even more freely than if he were conducting. None of his friends will ever again hear that music without recalling that sad hour in the Metropolitan Opera House. Anton Seidl's funeral will be forever associated with that Adagio Lamentoso, which Mr. Arthur Mees has described in these words:

"The movement begins with a cry of agony. Again and again it is repeated, rising to an intensity which tells of grief almost too great to be borne. At first moments of calmness seem to bring passing relief, but they are of short duration. The throes of agony return, and as they rack the heart they seem to extinguish the last sparks of energy and hope, one by one, until all is gloom—life has fled. The final measures of this movement, as their tones vanish in the lowest registers of the 'cellos and bases—can they mean anything but death, the darkness of the grave?"

LETTERS TO SEIDL

FROM

RICHARD WAGNER

AND OTHERS

LETTERS TO ANTON SEIDL

IT is related of Chopin that he would take a cab and drive from one end of Paris to another rather than write a letter. Schumann, Liszt and Wagner, on the contrary, were busy letter writers, and of Hans von Bülow's writings, mostly epistolary, three volumes have appeared at this date (February, 1899), with thirty more years to be heard from.

Anton Seidl was one of those who wrote letters only under compulsion or to please a friend. During the thirteen years I knew him, I did not receive more than half a dozen letters from him. One of them, it is true, was quite long—about twelve pages. I had been asked to send cable dispatches about the Bayreuth Festival of 1891 to a syndicate of American newspapers, but as I wished to remain in London till the last moment and knew that he was at Bayreuth during the time of the rehearsals I asked him to send me a brief résumé of the situation for a preliminary dispatch, which he promptly did.

From hints in Frau Cosima Wagner's letters I infer that Anton Seidl must have written her some long and interesting letters about the musical situation in America, which will probably be printed some day. On the whole, however, as episto-

lary correspondence made up so insignificant a part of his activity, I have decided not to print any of his letters, and also to select only a few from among those written to him. Prominent among these are twelve letters from Wagner. As was mentioned on a preceding page many of his letters from Wagner were lost in Italy by the breaking of one of his trunks. I find among the letters which Mrs. Seidl has placed at my disposal a number from friends and strangers praising and thanking him for some particularly fine performance. Among these is an amusing one from a Scotchman who, though he had not met the great conductor personally, addressed him as "My Dear Herr Anton Seidl. For you are dear to me by virtue of your kindly, sympathetic face and by your genius. I have heard most everything musical, dramatic and literary since I was carried on my father's shoulder to hear Jenny Lind sing in Glasgow, but I have heard no music in America previous to seeing you. Long life, good health and good luck to you. I don't like this country, but when I see you control an American audience of 3,000 persons into absolute silence for two hours, I feel there is hope for the country, and that they are likely to become civilized some time. Accept my heartfelt thanks for all the happiness your orchestra and yourself have given and will give me."

Another grateful listener writes: "I have just returned from a beautiful concert. You will, I trust, not think it rude in me to write at once to tell you how superb I found the music. The Schubert works were played, truly, far, far better than they ever were before in this city." There are many of these letters, and they doubtless pleased their modest recipient, who was sensitive to praise and over-sensitive to censure even when he knew it was undeserved and ignorant or obviously malicious. He should have borne in mind that no man who honestly and stubbornly

stands up for what is pure and good can escape the mudslingers who would fain have everything in the world as unclean and dishonest as they are.

Among the letters at my disposal is one from an admirer who wrote to Mr. Seidl to express his thanks for a particularly fine performance, and Mr. Seidl's reply to him, as follows: "I am glad with all my heart to hear that *Tristan* moved you so deeply. If a warm heart is so much impressed by a musical performance as yours was, according to your letter, the performance must have been lucid indeed; to hear which gives me great pleasure. The enormous amount of work before me makes it impossible to name a date for meeting you, but be assured that your letter will ensure you a place among my pleasant reminiscences."

Among the letters is one from Paderewski commending Mlle. Melanie Wienzkowski to Mr. Seidl's attention, and signed "Your cordially devoted and sincere admirer, I. J. Paderewski." It is well known that when these two great musicians played together the first time, they disagreed in regard to some detail of interpretation and were not on the best of terms for a time. But that soon passed away, and when Paderewski played with Seidl (in Brooklyn) the last time, and I asked him afterwards how Seidl conducted, he replied, "Divinely!"

The following letters are printed entire.

FROM ROBERT INGERSOLL

My Dear Mr. Seidl:

We all congratulate you on your great triumph.

We were not surprised. We all knew it—knew it long ago. We knew that you were the King of Leaders, the greatest interpreter of the greatest music.

When we read the accounts of your success we all applauded, we clapped our hands. We shouted "Bravo!"—we, the Browns, the Farrells, the Ingersolls, raised the roof.

We kept our eyes on you in London, at Bayreuth; we kept our ears open, we listened, and we heard the marvelous melodies—the divine harmonies, the floods and tempests, the tides and cataracts of passion—and we saw the many-colored domes rising in the heaven of sound, as you played *Parsifal* and *Tristan*.

We envied those who really saw and heard. We all glory in your great success. We are glad for ourselves—glad for Mrs. Seidl, glad for you, glad for Wagner.

And so we congratulate you and Mrs. Seidl, and we all send our love to both, and we all say, Come back as soon as you can.

Yours always,
R. G. Ingersoll

Walston, Dobbs' Ferry-on-Hudson.
August 1, 1897.

FROM TEMPLETON STRONG

My Dear Good Herr Capellmeister:

You must pardon my not having written to you several days ago, but I have not been at all well lately and am still unwell, suffering much from my head. Yet, I must write you a line just to tell you how deeply grateful I am to you for having taken so much trouble on my account and for the honor you

have done me. I thank you *right heartily* and I would give much to be able to give your hand a good, hearty shake. Your performing my symphony has been the only bright event of this winter for me. All here has been very, very dreary and full of trouble. Your interest in me has done much to give me courage to go on working, so I am again grateful to you. From the very beginning you have shown me one continuous kindness, and I do so wish I could express here in writing how keenly, very keenly, I appreciate it! My one regret about it all is, that I cannot think of anything *I* can do for *you*. You have been a kind and loyal friend to me and you have kept up my courage at a time when, God knows, my courage and desire to go on living were fast leaving me.

I shall be curious to see the criticisms! I hope the critics have not blamed *you* for producing the work of an American! And now let me thank you for the telegram! I was in bed when it came, little expecting so pleasant a surprise. Again, *ich danke*.

With my very best compliments to your good wife (ah, how well I remember the excellent dinners!) believe me ever sincerely and most gratefully,

Templeton Strong.

Vevey. March 9, 1893.

FROM JULES MASSENET

DEAR COLLEAGUE:

Having talked much about you, your great talents and your successes with my friend, Jean de Reszke, I feel the necessity of writing to you not only to thank you for your flattering sympathy toward some of my own works, but to tell you that

you have in me (since the performance of the Tetralogy in Brussels) a very *earnest admirer*. It was at London that I again met Jean and Edouard de Reszke.

At present I am in the country, and it is from my summer retreat that I write to express my *grateful feelings*.

Cordialement.
—Massenet

FROM EUGÈNE YSAYE

My Dear Friend:

I did not have the pleasure of seeing you before my departure. I should have been glad to, however, for I wanted to tell you how grateful I am that you gave me the opportunity to appear in the great concerts of America—how much I appreciate in you the amiable man, the witty talker and the masterly conductor that you are all in one. Whether or not I return to America you may be sure, my dear Seidl, that I shall always keep the remembrance of your kindly and cordial welcome. We certainly have thoughts in common about art and that, joined to the admiration that I feel toward you as a great musician, bind me to you with an affection that I shall endeavor to keep unchanged in the future. Tell your dear wife for me and for Madame Ysaye, how grateful we are for the amiable way in which she received me. I shall remember our artistic conversations, and I shall not fail to profit by your precious advice with regard to my performance of the Wagner-Wilhelmj ar-

rangements. For next winter I have recommended to Johnston, who has engaged him, the violinist Rivarde. Johnston and I both desire that this meritorious artist should make his début under your protection at the first Philharmonic concert. Rivarde has just made a great success in London at the Nikisch concerts, with Beethoven's Concerto and Lalo's Spanish Symphony. This is the programme he will offer you. Rivarde is in *every way* worthy of your concerts, and I hope you will be willing to give him a place at the first.

Your devoted friend who embraces you,



FROM ANTONIN DVOŘÁK

My Dear Friend:

Your letter reached me quite well and was a great joy to me. Many, many thanks for it. You ask me about my symphonic poems.

O, my dear, they are ready, and just two weeks ago Simrock made it public. You can get them any time, and you have only to apply to Schirmer. In case you would like to put them on the programme, I should advise you to give it separated.

The Wassermann takes about eighteen minutes in performance, the Midnoonwitch (Mittagshexe) thirteen, but the Golden Spinning-wheel twenty-five to thirty minutes. And so, I think, it would be too much *all three at one concert.*

The best you could do is to give the Wassermann and Midnoonwitch in one concert and the Spinning-wheel in the next. I am very anxious to hear your opinion of my new efforts.

I should be happy if they would please you. I am writing a new series of symphony poems, and just now I have finished one. It is called The Pigeon (Die Taube).

All the poems are made after Erben Ballads (the author of the "Spectre's Bride," you know), and I am just delighted of it. As those poems express really our national feelings, so I endeavored to keep those. We all prize the national form, what fits us so nicely, as the people say. Don't laugh!

Some features you will perhaps find very funny, but this is just what I like. Don't laugh. For instance in the Hexe: The little child is crying immensely; the mother tries to make it quiet and calm, but the little one does not care, is crying again; the mother gets in rage and calls the witch (she really appears). And now the horrible story between mother and witch is going on, which you find in the printed score. There is, of course, only the extract of the original poem.

If this letter reaches you send me afterward a line more. I will be always happy to hear from my good friend Seidl.

With best regards to Mrs. Seidl and you,

Yours truly

Antonín Dvořák

Don't forget to remember me to all my friends in America. But it would take too much time for you, don't you think?

Prague, 18 $\frac{12}{11}$ 96.

Herr Anton Seidel aus Pest hat mir seit fünf Jahren in der Vorbereitung der Aufführung meines Bühnenfestspieles, sowie bei den Aufführungen selbst, als sachverständiger Musiker fördernd zur Seite gestanden, und sowohl für Einübung als Ausführung meiner Werke sich vorzüglich bewährt, so dass es mir jedes Augenblick möglich gewünscht hätte, in sonstigen Fällen ihm die volle Direktion zu übergeben, nachdem er mir auch durch die mehrjährige Leitung von Orchesterkonzerten seinen Beruf zu einem energischen und musikalischen Dirigenten vollkommen bewährt hat.

Bayreuth
27 Sept. 1877.

Richard Wagner

FROM RICHARD WAGNER

MR. ANTON SEIDL, of Pest, has during the last five years been at my side helping me as an expert musician in the preparations for my Festival Play and at the performances. He has proved himself eminently capable at the rehearsals as well as at the performances, so that in case of necessity I should have considered it possible at any moment to put the directorship entirely in his hands, all the more because his leadership of orchestral concerts during several years has conclusively proven his qualifications as an energetic and careful conductor.

RICHARD WAGNER.*

Bayreuth, September 7, 1877.

DEAREST FRIEND AND COMRADE:

You know that I write only when the water is up to my neck.

Many thanks for your two letters! Keep it up.

Accordingly—!

Herewith a letter for Angelo, which you could best forward—perhaps through the local mail—because I don't know when the gentleman will be in Leipsic.

In this letter I have proposed and advised everything. Your engagement (to begin with, for the *Nibelungen*) as well as a definite arrangement with Jaeger, to whom please give our regards.

We are as fond of you as ever and are passably well. A few days ago I resumed my composing.

Best regards from R. W.

Bayreuth, June 29 (30), 1878.

*See facsimile of the original of this testimonial, on opposite page.

My Dear Friend Seidl:

Your excellent letter from Leipsic seems to have exhausted you completely. As you remain silent I will at least tell you what has happened of late in regard to a position for you. Long and detailed correspondence with Braunschweig; too late, Riedel sent the contract already signed. In reference to Triest I remained for a long time without a reply; finally the offer was declined because the strength of the Italian sentiment made the engagement of a *German* leader appear dangerous. Jauner, on the other hand, accepted by wire. It is well that you quickly responded to my request. This at present unimportant position will bring good results. In the first place, you will greatly advance the cause (*vide* Jaeger), and particularly as coach for the singers you will make up in the quickest and most practical way what you are lacking: thorough knowledge of the repertory of our theatres. *After that* it will be no trouble at all to conduct all those things. I earnestly hope that you will make rapid progress from now on, but a beginning *had* to be made.

I had to look for a piano teacher for my oldest daughter, because Daniela especially received such instruction in London. Liszt recommended a pianist by name of Kellermann, who has been educated in his school. He is quite a finished piano player, but to my regret very backward as regards music in general, because he had to practice piano technique fourteen hours a day. He is of no use at all to me. He has been studying your transcription of the first act of *Parsifal* for a month, as if it were a piece for the piano. He is otherwise well educated and modest. I have now commenced the third act and don't care what happens after this. Everybody in Wahnfried sends heartiest greetings. Give my regards to Richter, whom I don't "congratulate" any more! (Foolish stuff!)

Write me and may you reap joy with Jaeger—*your* creation. You can advise him better than anybody else, for you have assisted at Unger's instruction.

Therefore, God be with you!

Your always devoted RICHARD WAGNER.

Bayreuth, November 2, 1878.

DEAR FRIEND:

Here I have once more received a strange letter to which I do not reply because it tells me nothing. Acting on the information you sent me I wrote to Director Neumann and told him not to produce *Tristan* as a star performance but as part of his regular repertory. In doing this I had the idea in my mind to arrange for Jaeger's engagement after all. As you told me that it was impossible to produce *Tristan* during the summer months, because the singer you have picked out for Isolde is *enceinte*, I replied to Mr. Neumann that this delay was quite agreeable to me, because I intended to pass the summer at Naples on account of the bathing. Here is the Director's reply: Not one word about Jaeger or the delay until I can come. But I will *not* give my consent to the production of *Tristan* if I cannot attend the rehearsals and—in accordance with my promise—arrange the work myself with reference to the ensemble that can be procured at Leipsic. This must be done because I want Leipsic to accomplish an unqualified success.

Be kind enough to inform the proper persons of this.

I am passably well and hope at last to get over the consequences of Bayreuth's climatic conditions entirely.

Everybody sends regards with true affection.

Your good old R. WAGNER.

March 5, 1880, Villa d'Angri, Naples.

DEAR FRIEND:

That is a nasty affair, that story of the "lost" letter. Only once before a similar thing happened to me, when Director Jauner of Vienna claimed that he had *not received* a letter which demanded a decisive answer. All other letters have always arrived promptly. It is very unpleasant to me that Director Neumann was in no way disturbed when he received *no* reply to his last letter—not even through you—and calmly continued *his* preparations for the production of *Tristan* during the summer.

In short: I have to bathe in the sea here all summer and cannot return to Bayreuth before December. Of this I informed Neumann in that "lost letter" two months ago. I shall not permit the production of *Tristan without my coöperation*, for good and sufficient reasons, which unfortunately are lost. I must arrange this work first in order to make the production possible, and I cannot leave this arrangement to anybody else, certainly not to you, dear Seidl, because you show by your action in this affair that you don't know what it is about. I have no more to say about this.

Either Mr. Neumann acts with the consideration due to me and puts off the production of *Tristan* until it is possible for me to assist, or I must publicly and—if possible—with the help of the courts protest and remonstrate.*

* For once Richard Wagner lost patience with Anton Seidl. He had come to the conclusion that *Tristan and Isolde* needed revision before it could be produced successfully at Leipsic, whereas Seidl, with his enthusiasm for the opera, and his confidence in the master's genius and the singers, made up his mind to go ahead regardless of remonstrance and threats of appeals to the courts. It was a case of the egg being really wiser than the hen, to use a homely German comparison. As we saw in the biographic chapter, this Leipsic performance of *Tristan* was such a brilliant success that Wagner wrote to Neumann, the manager: "Now it has succeeded without my coöperation, and that astonishes me! Well, good luck! I certainly discover in Seidl hidden faculties which only require a fostering warmth to surprise even myself."

I have nothing to add to this, except the demand to inform me of the decision of the Leipsic management within eight days or not later than April 30th.

Farewell and be sure of our best regards. Yours,

R. WAGNER.

Villa d'Angri, April 16, 1880, Naples.

Pray tell me, dear Seidl, whether you have received my letter containing a note from Mr. A. Neumann, which I sent you at least five weeks ago.

That you did not answer at all did not cause me any serious apprehension for C. J., but it perplexes me if I continually find in the newspapers reports of my visit to Leipsic this summer, and of other matters in connection with such a trip. I wrote you that I am going to stay here all summer on account of the sea-bathing, and that I will not return to Bayreuth before the beginning of winter, and that I would then come to L. if a good Tristan was there.

Now please let me have some news.

You—bad fellow!

Yours,

WAGNER.

Naples, Villa d'Angri Posilipo, April 6, 1880.

MY DEAR SEIDL:

What shall I write you? Neumann evades me just as he did in regard to Jaeger, and it is entirely impossible to continue advising him. I am compelled to let everything at Leipsic go as it pleases. The worst thing is that affair with Sucher; if I wanted to interfere there I would at least have to go to L.

Highly as he esteemed his pupil, he had underrated his ability. From that Leipsic performance under Seidl dates the triumphant career of *Tristan and Isolde*.

myself, which would cause indescribable confusion. The best thing would be if you would give Sucher a piece of your mind, mentioning me directly as your authority. Don't be insulting, but very decided. As I said, I cannot say another word to Neumann; but whatever may happen do, in any case, try to get a position—no matter what kind—at a theatre. This is indispensable for your whole life. Everybody must make a beginning—think of me! In a certain sense your long stay at Bayreuth has really handicapped you. Should you personally suffer want let me know it; you can rely on my assistance.

Jaeger I don't understand either. He has evidently no inspiration; all he wants is an extra good engagement. God knows how it will work with Unger! But, as I said, it is impossible for *me* to talk to or advise Neumann; he acts as if he didn't understand me.

Therefore—

We have always visitors I am always working a little but slowly.

Everybody remembers you with affection and the memory of the "uncle" is still green.

Heartiest greetings.

[Date line and signature given away by Mr. Seidl.]

MANY THANKS, DEAR SEIDL:

I wish you luck for everything good in which you assist.

But now be good enough to get Mr. Rosenheim to show you my receipt for the November royalties for the *Walküre*. I cannot at all recall having received any money from Leipsic during December—*i. e.*, for November.

This may not amount to much, but it worries me and I

can't get rid of the idea that people might consider me forgetful.

Now then, good luck to you.

Yours,

WAGNER.

Bayreuth, January 24, 1881.

DEAR FRIEND:

Will you kindly give my best regards to Mrs. Sachse-Hofmeister and also thank her in my name for her well-meant proposals.

I am now always at home and request you two to come just as it pleases you.

At all events, however, be sure to combine *your* visit with that of Mr. Winkelmann.

I also thank you for the information you sent me; I have taken the necessary steps.

May we soon meet again! Your

RICHARD WAGNER.

Bayreuth, June 17, 1881.

DEAR FRIEND:

I came here with my wife, Eva and Fidie to consult a dentist, and intend to return Monday afternoon by way of Leipsic to avoid a night trip from Dresden. Be kind enough to engage rooms for us in the Hôtel Hauff. If there is anything interesting to be seen in the theatre we may go there.

It is also of importance to hear something definite about Neumann's plans for Dresden. I have not spoken about this to anybody connected with the theatre, but Dr. Hartmann assures me that Neumann has told him, before starting on his

last trip to Hungary, that the production of the *Ring des Nibelungen* by the *ensemble* of the Court Theatre was a settled fact. This would mean that Neumann could sell his exclusive right of producing the *Ring* to others for so and so much.

In this case Neumann had better look out, as he would be in a decidedly uncomfortable position and I would be compelled to cancel the whole contract.

Please send me one word about this at once. I will notify you by wire of the time of our arrival. Your,

R. W.

Dresden, Hotel Bellevue, September 10, 1881.

My Dear Seidl :

It was impossible to let you have the *Parsifal* prelude because I had already referred it to Richter, who, as you know, originally gave concerts only. While the competition between Neumann's enterprise and Richter-Pollini is very disagreeable to me, I gave my consent only because I was almost forced to do it. It is impossible to hurt Richter by giving you something that I have refused to him. Now you also know my experience with Albert Hall; it worries me that Neumann expects to realize large profits there. I can account for this idea only on the assumption that somebody believes that a great many people have not the means and the time to attend the complete performances of the *Nibelungen*, and that they could be served by giving them fragments in a summary way in one evening. It is possible that in this way that terrible space can be filled. But *in that case* success depends solely on those parts of the *Nibelungen* which the public desires to hear.

I am thankful to Mr. Neumann for his prompt telegraphic reports of the results of the first performance of every part. Of

the second performance I have heard nothing; has it taken place?

I hope you will believe that I rejoice in your success. You know that I rely on you above all others.

How is it? Can I have Schelper for Bayreuth to alternate from time to time with Hill as Klingsor? I am not helpless in this case, but I believe I am doing right if I give Schelper the chance to show his aptitude for impassioned characterization.

Well, the dear God in heaven bless you all! Give my best regards to my old and new Nibelungs, and let us see you again at our house where you are always welcome, as you know well enough.

With all my heart, yours, RICH. WAGNER.

Bayreuth, May 16, 1882.

DEAR SEIDL:

I presume that you have returned to Leipsic and thank you, in the first place, for your pleasant letter from London. There will be much to say about the character of the execution of this difficult enterprise; especially the error in regard to the responsiveness of the London public will have to be corrected. That Pollini affair has been very unpleasant, but in my present condition I cannot attend to these matters as closely as might be desirable, and I am—in order to get the rest I absolutely need—often compelled to let matters drift along. Director Neumann has also of late given me almost too much work with the granting of all kinds of concessions, and my head is sometimes quite dizzy. In addition to all this we have new complications: for instance, at present with Berlin about *Lohengrin*. I can't find my old contract with Hülsen, and don't know whether I have given him the exclusive right to produce the opera in Berlin.

I don't believe it, for such arrangements were not made at that time. If he claims that right now he should show his proof, but he will probably simply attempt to rely on old privileges which are no longer in force since the old laws have ceased to be in force. Director Neumann must, *in any case*, arrange this matter with Voltz and Baltz, as this opera (*Lohengrin*) was at the time given over so far as Germany is concerned to those gentlemen.

In regard to *Tristan and Isolde*, I am settling the matter in such a way that those gentlemen will have nothing more to do with the sale of that work.

There is great uncertainty about N's relations to Staegemann. The latter is said to have ordered from Bruckner, of Coburg, the decorations for the *Nibelungenring* for Leipsic.

Please drop that affair about Schelper. Levi has already engaged Kindermann to alternate as Klingsor. I will not disturb this arrangement and don't need Schelper.

Let us see you soon again here and continue to like

Your old,

R. WAGNER.

June 4, 1882.

BRAVO, DEAR SEIDL:

Do not fail to insist upon the vacation and come to me as quickly as possible. You can stay with us. You must help me again; on the 25th of December I intend to have my symphony, which will be just fifty years old on that day, played for my wife. I have been promised that a fairly good orchestra will be formed from the pupils of the conservatory and you will have to manage the rehearsals. A few new arrangements will also be necessary. Therefore, go ahead!

Your telegram has delighted all Venice. My best regards to Neumann and his Nibelung Heroes! Favorable news is always very welcome, etc.

Adieu! Your very old R. W.

Venice, Palazzo Vendramin, Canal Grande, December 2, 1882.

DEAR SEIDL:

Your last letter has delighted and touched us very much and I should reply to it more fully—but just now I have not the time and must confine myself to ask a favor of minor importance.

If Scaria is with you I wish to ask him to have a letter forwarded which I just now sent to his address in Vienna.

About Neumann's enterprise, which I consider extremely difficult, I must hear at last something definite. It worries me that he does not want to give me at least an estimate of his receipts in order to enable me to form an idea. I am afraid that he has involved himself in such terrible expenses that he does not want to consider at this moment under what obligations he is to me. I would like very much to receive some reassuring news on this point and you might be able to procure them by talking the matter over confidentially.

Bremer with his 4⅓ violin does not please me either. It is hard for me to interfere with his affairs as long as he does not ask for my opinion. God knows!

Well! You remain always dear to me, even if I do not need an orchestra this time. Newspaper gossip!

Everything remains as it was! Best regards from yours,

RICH. WAGNER.

Venice, January 1, 1883.

Dedication on fly-leaf of *Parsifal* text-book.

DEAR SEIDL:

I return your fine copy, turned into elegant type, and hope that it will please you as much as those splendid amateur concerts of last winter.

Many thanks,

RICH. WAGNER.

Wagner was much given to punning—like Shakespeare, Beethoven and other great men. When he presented the score of *Die Götterdämmerung* to Seidl, he wrote into it "Auf der Welt ist alles Seidl"—"everything in this world is Seidl" (instead of "eitel," vanity). On the *Rheingold* score he wrote these lines, dated Christmas, 1874:

Auf der Welt ist alles eitel:
Wer kein Maass hat, trinkt sein Seidl.
Anton nur ist's ganz gelungen:
Von der Sohle bis zum Scheitel,
Hat er sich hineingesungen
In den Ring des Nibelungen.

Which, perhaps, may be thus translated, with the explanation that Maass (mug) and Seidl mean the same thing.

In this world all things are idle,
Hast no mug? then take your Seidl.
Anton only has succeeded:
From the head down to his lung
He alone himself has sung
Into the Ring of the Nibelung.

The letters from Frau Cosima Wagner I do not feel at liberty to print entire on account of some personal allusions. A few extracts, however, are permissible.

FROM COSIMA WAGNER

My Dear Friend:

On the morning of June 6th, just on Siegfried's birthday, we received your entertaining and newsy letter, and you could not have sent us a more welcome gift than all this information. Every item was of value to us in confirming and enlarging our impressions. I am sorry we cannot have you among us this summer, but I rejoice greatly at the thought of seeing you again next summer, and so do my children.

Your *Tristan* performance must have been very fine, and I wish I could hear it again sung beautifully—as I once did by Schnorr.

You are quite right: the theatre-hero mask (Theater-Heros Fratze) is of small account, and I believe that whoever sings and speaks these works with real beauty of voice finds the proper physiognomic expression and gestures spontaneously.

I am glad to hear from you so many good things about Madame Nordica. The hours devoted to her studying of the rôle of Elsa with me are among my pleasant reminiscences. Did Jean de Reszke tell you he studied the part of Tristan with Kniese?

I am dreadfully sorry not to be able to have these two great artists, Jean and Edouard, with me. I have done all I could to secure them.

We are working busily amid the difficult circumstances created by the present-day theater! Alas, our art is in a dreadful condition. Everything is going to ruin.

Siegfried will give you pleasure: he is entirely *genuine!* and to me an indispensable aid.

Of the '76 singers we shall have Lilli Lehmann and Vogl. Also Mottl and Kranich. Richter as a matter of course. So that I can rely on having plenty of assistance in refreshing my reminiscences. For ten days we have been trying the new swimming machines (not carts).

Of what you know, dear friend, you can never tell me too much. I was much entertained by your story of the dragon and the sacrificed garment! That was a merry state of affairs. I also laughed much over the ritardando in the *Walküre* Vorspiel. I could tell you similar stories—others, too, of another kind.

All these things may be deferred till we can talk them over in a happy hour! Farewell, dear friend, accept once more my thanks, with the most cordial greetings from all of us.

C. WAGNER.

Bayreuth, Wahnfried, June 6, 1896.

In the spring of 1897 Mr. Seidl received the following despatch from Bayreuth:

"Is your coming to Europe certain? If so I offer you conductorship of *Parsifal.* Silence for the present desirable."

WAHNFRIED.

This despatch was followed soon by Mme. Wagner's letter:

WAHNFRIED, March 9, 1897.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

All Wahnfried thanks you in advance for your consent, which has given us great joy.

WALTHER'S SONG IN "TANNHÄUSER"

In December, 1888, Anton Seidl allowed the New York *Figaro* to print a version of Walther's song in the second act of *Tannhäuser* in Wagner's own handwriting which was made for the Paris Grand Opéra, and a facsimile of which is incorporated in this volume. Mr. Seidl appended the following explanation :

"I believe I am offering the musical public and my colleagues something worth knowing in making them acquainted with one of the master's compositions of which few seem to know the existence. In 1860, at the recommendation of the Princess of Metternich, Napoleon III gave the order that *Tannhäuser* should be produced at the Grand Opera, and for this occasion Wagner made important changes in the score. The Venusberg scene, in particular, was so much enlarged that Venus is brought up almost to the level of a Brünnhilde or an Isolde. The orchestration of the opera was subjected almost throughout to a thorough revision. The contest of singers in the second act also suffered many changes. To accelerate the action, Walther's song was omitted entirely. But that the master did not make up his mind to this cut without a struggle is proved by the careful revision of Walther's song which he made for the French score, changing the four-four time of the original version to three-four, in deference to the foreign tongue. If we compare the two readings of this song, we note, at once, the subtle intelligence the master displayed in the way in which he changed the melody to the more flowing three-four rhythm without omitting a detail of the original. The Paris version of this song has not appeared in print, for the master omitted it from the later complete edition which Fürstenau, of Berlin, published with the object of not retarding the action of the second act unnecessarily—a proceeding which I am sure is regretted by many who now miss the peculiarly German sentimental personality of Walther von der Vogelweide. So far as I know there exists no other copy of the French version of this song.

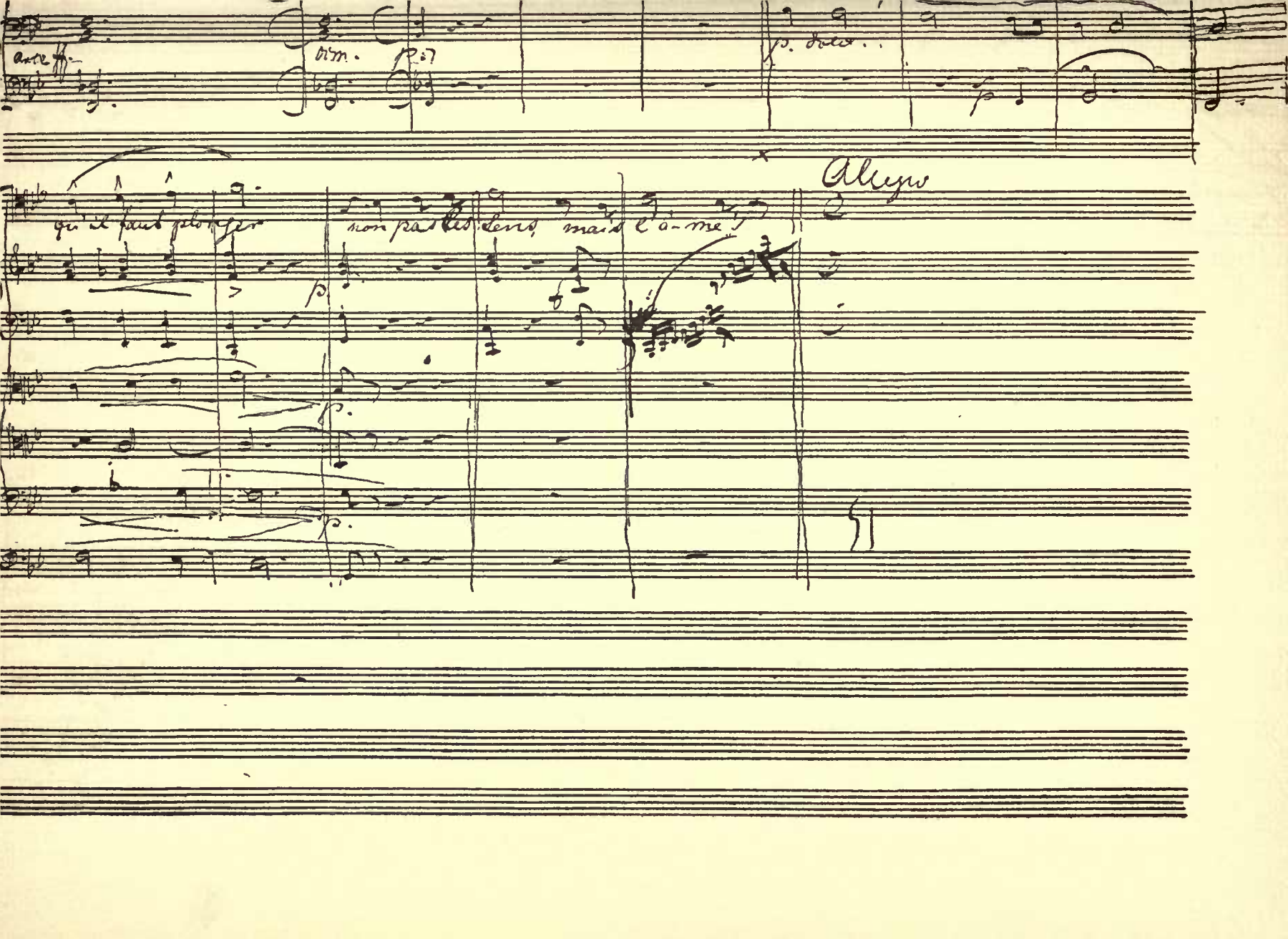
THE SONG OF WALTHER VON DER VOGELWEIDE IN TANNHÄUSER

FAC-SIMILE OF WAGNER'S ORIGINAL MS.




Harps.
Altos (divisi)
p.
Violins (divisi)
p.
p. dolce
p. dolce.
p. dolce.
poco più animato
- ne - ne cha — que jour.
Mais di jamais la lè — ne impri — me
f


Cuypeau plus animé
flat sac-re s'enivrait, pour punir cette ardeur pas-sa-ge le
Tempo
ralentir.
Tempo I.mo
flat de-vint de fa-ta-li-té. C'est dans ce flat pour apaiser la flamme
ralentir.


Allegro
qu'il faut plonger
non pas les sens mais l'âme !

I enclose the dates of rehearsals. Please telegraph me one word ("agreed"), so I shall know it is all right, then we can go into details. I *hope* the plan will suit you, and Mr. Grau too. You would rehearse *Parsifal* on June 30th and July 1st, and would then be free to fly (to London) till July 12th, whereafter you would remain with us.

Siegfried sends very special greetings. He is delighted that you are coming and I thank you for your warm words about him. . . .

You see, my dear friend, I am getting garrulous. This will prove to you my genuine delight over your letter. Let me press your hand while I say *auf Wiedersehen.*

You were always a favorite at Wahnfried and always will remain so. We shall have many things to tell one another. You have your experiences, I mine. With kindest greetings from all of us. C. WAGNER.

Richard Wagner and his family indeed loved and treated Anton Seidl as if he had been one of them, and among the many letters of condolence there was one from this family expressing the deepest sorrow—a sorrow brightened only by the fact that it had been his privilege before his death to conduct the work at the creation of which he had assisted at Bayreuth. Mme. Daniela Thode (née von Bülow) wrote that she regarded it as a blessed omen that one of the last functions by which he showed his devotion to his cause and his goodness of heart was the production in America of her brother Siegfried's symphonic poem, "Sehnsucht."

In the *Bayreuther Blätter* for 1898 (V, VI) Hans von Wolzogen printed the German originals of Wagner's letters to Seidl contained in this volume (except those dated September

10, 1881, May 16, 1882, June 4, 1882,) and an obituary notice from which I gather a few interesting facts not previously alluded to. Seidl put together the orchestral score of *Parsifal* which was always in use at Wagner's house, up to about the middle of the second act. In Bayreuth, where he remained as a regular member of the Wagner family until 1878, he conducted the amateur orchestra and Wagner repeatedly attended the concerts as he at once recognized Seidl as a born conductor. As early as 1884, Frau Wagner had intended to ask him to conduct *Parsifal*, with Levi as colleague ; but Seidl could not leave America. He had great faith in the musical ability of Siegfried Wagner, who looked up to him as his master ; but Seidl, with characteristic modesty, did not like this and wanted to invert the relation. "In London," Herr von Wolzogen concludes, " where Seidl was to conduct the Covent Garden performances again, his young friend Siegfried intended to visit him and take him back to Bayreuth for a long visit. Seidl had also spoken of his plan of buying a house in Bayreuth and making it his home."

ANTON SEIDL'S LITERARY WORK

ANTON SEIDL'S LITERARY WORK

ANTON SEIDL was too busy with rehearsals and performances to have much time for literary work. Of the few articles he wrote, the most important are the two on Conducting which he contributed to the sumptuous subscription work of which he was the editor-in-chief, *The Music of the Modern World*, published by D. Appleton & Co., who have very kindly allowed their reprint in this volume. They were translated by Mr. Krehbiel, and, as I have said before, they rank second only to Wagner's famous essay "On Conducting." In 1897 I had the privilege of translating a most interesting article of his on the *Tannhäuser* Overture for a subscription book. But as this is not yet in print it was of course impossible to secure permission to incorporate it in this volume. It takes the witty form of a lecture to a late-comer at the opera, telling him of all the fine things he has missed.

At the conclusion of the German opera season, 1887–8, a souvenir was issued by the New York Figaro Publishing Co., which included, among other things, a series of reflections on the past season by Mr. Seidl. These I have had translated for this volume. I also insert a few paragraphs from an article on

the Development of Music in America, which appeared in the *Forum* for May, 1892, and which Dr. Rice has kindly allowed me to use. The greater part of it refers to temporary conditions which existed after the expulsion of German opera, but the following pages are worth reproducing.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUSIC IN AMERICA

"I have been accused of being a blind devotee of German opera, but I believe that this charge is undeserved. It is true that I adhere to the new school of music as opposed to the old, and I support any good music written after the new forms, whether it comes from a German, French, an Italian, or an English composer. The Germans are not the only composers who follow the new school of musical composition, though inasmuch as this school was founded by a German, they naturally have become identified with it on account of the enthusiastic support which they have given it. It is a mistake, however, to say that the new forms of music are due wholly to Wagner. Wagner created them, but he was himself the creation of his time. We had grown away from the old methods, and the conditions were ripe for a new and higher development. Wagner saw in the opera the possibilities which it afforded for the expression of the profoundest emotions and the noblest sentiments of man, and he developed them as no one before or no one since has done. He saw clearly the folly of attempting to foster incompleteness in art, and maintained that no art deserved the name of art unless it was perfectly rounded; so he made opera the vehicle not merely for pretty voices, but for the highest forms of music. Wagner is to music what Shakespeare is to the drama. His theories have now been widely accepted, his example followed by many imitators, and there is no doubt

that the future development of music will be on the lines he has laid down.

"The Americans, notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary, are a musical people. Their taste is still unformed, but it is naturally a good one and is sure to grow in the right direction. But in order to grow in the right direction it must be properly cultivated. It has thus far been sufficiently developed to enable them to appreciate the superiority of the new methods in music over the old. What has already been achieved is remarkable when one considers the disadvantages which retard the progress of music in this country. Whenever operas have been given they have been almost invariably sung in an alien tongue. This is of course a great obstacle to their appreciation. No satisfactory artistic results can be achieved here, nor can America produce any national music, until opera is given in English. I look forward to the time when American composers shall produce great operatic works of a distinctly original character written in the vernacular; but until that time comes I believe that such foreign works as are performed here should be translated into English. The achievements of such American composers as Professor J. K. Paine, who has done admirable work, of E. A. McDowell, whose compositions seem to me to be superior to those of Brahms, of G. W. Chadwick, Templeton Strong, and others, augur well for the future productions of American composers. The unsatisfactory condition of our musical culture is due chiefly to the intermittent opportunities which are given here for musical education. It would be folly to expect people to form a healthy musical taste simply by hearing operas occasionally produced and almost always in an inadequate manner. Besides, such operas as we hear are generally given under alien conditions, which make them foreign to

the American mind. The singers whom America imports in such large numbers from abroad do undoubtedly a great deal of good, but they also do harm, for they bring influences which are essentially un-American.

"What we need is American opera given under American influences. This can be brought about only by an elaborate and well-organized system of musical education. We have plenty of good material for the making of musicians, but this material is buried beneath the army of foreign artists who come annually to our shores, and whom Americans have formed the habit of encouraging—often simply because they are foreigners. In order to bring out this latent material, a school for opera should be established here. If conducted on the best principles, it would be of inestimable advantage. It would keep at home those young musicians who annually go abroad to study, sometimes under the greatest disadvantages, and would encourage those to undertake a musical education who are deterred from it by the expense which they would incur by European training. The school should not only train singers, but also young men ambitious to become orchestra-players and orchestra-leaders. There should be in connection with it a theatre in which operas might be produced. The institution would thus be a practical school for opera. The first year after its establishment should be spent in fundamental training. Private performances of opera should be given, but no public ones until the artists had been thoroughly disciplined. As soon as this was accomplished, three or four operas might be publicly produced each year. Native singers would thus have the advantage of being heard under the most favorable conditions, and native instrumentalists would display their talent in the orchestra; we need, especially, a better training in this country for orchestra-leaders. American

composers, too, would be greatly helped, for the school should endeavor to encourage them, not by ignoring works written by foreigners, but by giving preference to operas written by Americans. If it were possible to raise a guarantee fund for such an establishment, splendid results might be obtained in a very short time.

"Such a plan as I have suggested may seem impracticable, but I am convinced that if it were carried out under the best auspices, that is, controlled by persons who had the interest of music at heart, it would surely be a success. But if it were controlled simply by the rich who regarded music as a mere diversion, it would surely be a failure. America is a great country but it has as yet done very little in the arts. Nevertheless, there is no reason why it should not develop an individual musical art which should compare favorably with that of Germany or France or Italy. Such an institution would be of immense benefit if it only taught us to cease aping the French and Italian peculiarities and to work on individual lines. Let us, by all means, assimilate what is best in German, French, and Italian art, but we can do this without being enslaved by any one of them; and let us endeavor to express our own natures, which is, after all, the only means of attaining that highest and best of qualities, originality."

CUTS IN THE NIBELUNG TRILOGY

"Much has been said lately about cuts and about the excessive length of the Wagner operas. Although I was willing to meet the wishes of the public by reducing these operas to four hours, I did this really with a heavy heart. The public may believe me when I say that any cut, no matter how short, does not save as much time as will compensate for the less thorough

understanding of the opera therefrom resulting. Taking as an example in the second act of the *Walküre*, the much-decried narrative of Wotan, I declare that the spectators who hear nothing, or only a part of this narrative, cannot get at the very kernel of the whole opera, which lies in that narrative. The public can in that case appreciate the beauty of the music alone. The action is unfolded before its eyes, but the "why" of the plot is not made clear. I know a good many highly cultured friends of music, musicians themselves, who were unable to narrate to me correctly the plot of the *Walküre*. And yet here come persons who ask me to reduce the evenings to three hours each. To such a request no answer is possible."

A SCENE IN THE GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

"I have heard that various persons have expressed the opinion that the two scenes in the last act of the *Götterdämmerung* representing Walhalla with Wotan and the Gods who are expecting their end and the all-reconciling Brünnhilde are not in the Wagnerian style. I agree that the figures by themselves do not present the situation as correctly as does the music of the orchestra, but as an explanation of the music they are quite in their proper place. The text-book used at the Metropolitan contains, besides other errors, only the laconic phrase: "A northern light appears in the sky," but in the orchestral and vocal scores Wagner's scenic directions are printed too.

"The omission of these directions has led some persons into the error of declaring things to be un-Wagnerian that were prescribed by Wagner himself.

"Brünnhilde's address to the men, which was said to have been 'cut' here, was, as a matter of fact, never composed for the public."

FAFNER'S DEATH

"Every time that the dragon scene is enacted on the stage I see, in different parts of the house, smiles of contempt or expressions of surprise at the childishness of the idea of making a dragon sing. These people I should like to take to Munich where the part of Fafner is sung by the veteran Kindermann; seldom have I heard anything more pathetic on the stage than the song of the dying dragon. Not only I, who might be accused of partiality, but the whole audience were carried away by sympathy and pity to such an extent that I saw tears rolling down many cheeks. I never saw the death of Fafner, the last of his race, enacted more pathetically than by this artist."

SIEGFRIED'S NARRATIVE

"I often heard, to cite another example, that many do not realize the import of Siegfried's narrative in the third act of the *Götterdämmerung*, and that the singer's method seems to be the source of the misunderstanding. In this scene Siegfried relates reminiscences of his childhood days. He also mentions the most remarkable occurrence of his life when, in consequence of having moistened his lips with dragon's blood, he learned to understand the speech of the birds. Now it is of course quite unnatural for Siegfried here to imitate the voice of the bird. He merely tells the men what the bird sang. What can have induced certain singers when they come to this most serious part of the narrative relating to the language of the bird, to make use of an utterly unnatural comic falsetto tone, as if to make it seem as if a bird's voice might be imitated by a tenor? Many people are, perhaps, pleased with such a trick which brings the singer to the foreground improperly at the expense of the hero Siegfried, who did not twitter the words of the bird to the men, but told

them in a simple manner what the bird had sung. The accompanying music conveys plainly enough the meaning of the song. By his treatment of this narrative Niemann proved in New York not only how great he is as singer and as actor, but how much he is ahead of other artists in his comprehension of Wagner's works. His is a narrative worthy of a hero!"

ORCHESTRA AND SINGER

"As a proof that the singer's voice need not always be tied up with the orchestra, I will cite the well-known love song in the first act of *Die Walküre* which ends in the orchestra pianissimo but is sung by the vocalist with exuberant joy and vernal vivacity. I might similarly indicate many things which are in no wise noted in the score and can only be read between the lines by such as have penetrated the nature of these mysteries. What must here be read between the lines is what I call *style*. The Nibelung Cycle is now produced in every land. Its measure of success is in exact ratio with the style in which it is produced.

"I believe that I am not talking *pro domo* in asserting that the New York public has reason to be more than satisfied with the local production of the Nibelung's Ring. Here and there a part might possibly have a stronger impersonator, a scenic effect be more clearly produced, a change of scenery more promptly made, but as a whole no one will be able to assert that the productions were not strictly in accordance with the master's intention. So when any one asserts that in *Tristan*, for example, I allow the orchestra to drown the voices of the singers, he is guilty of malicious misrepresentation, which may have been originated by a spectator who sat in a front seat of the parquet immediately behind the trombones. As I cannot let the men play pianissimo during the whole evening, and the orchestra is

not played for the benefit of certain seats, I can only advise said spectators to sit a few seats further back. That the covered orchestra at Bayreuth obviates all such objections anybody who has been present at the performances in that place knows as well as I do."

SCHUMANN AND WAGNER

Before we pass on to the great essay on Conducting, I wish to cite part of a letter which Mr. Seidl wrote to me under date of January 2, 1894. It throws light on a much-discussed incident. Wagner was bitterly censured, because, as his enemies alleged, he had inspired, or even written, the attack on Schumann's music which appeared in the *Bayreuther Blätter*, under the name of Joseph Rubinstein. In reply to a question of mine as to whether there was any truth in this accusation, Mr. Seidl wrote as follows:

"If Wagner had not considered it beneath his dignity to answer the contemptible accusations or insinuations made at the time, he would have done so. I was at Bayreuth, in Wagner's house, shortly before the notorious article of Joseph Rubinstein appeared in the *Bayreuther Blätter*. And previous to that time, on many occasions, Wagner had expressed himself in the most appreciative terms in regard to Schumann's *Manfred*, and even the opera *Genoveva;* he spoke of *Manfred* as the product of a genuinely creative mind, which, however, like Mendelssohn's *Midsummer-Night's Dream* music, was unfortunately not equaled by the later works of these composers—an opinion which, I need not say, is shared by many. On the other hand, it is self-evident that Wagner, the energetic, the hero whose mind was strengthened by the steel rhythms of Beethoven's symphonies, could not sympathize with the dreamy character of Schumann's

symphonies. I remember his speaking one day to a group of friends about the so-called Rhenish symphony, which was based on a definite idea—particularly the solemn section relating to the cathedral—and also about the transition to the last movement of the D minor symphony. This proves once more that Wagner, as is well known, always searched for the idea underlying a composition, and naturally, therefore—and rightly, from his point of view—spoke only of works, or parts of works, in which he found such an underlying idea. He had been led by Beethoven to do that—can anyone blame him for that? Or is not Wagner a genius, in whom one must pardon such a weakness—if it were a weakness, which it is not? Have not all composers their weak points?

"And now let me add, that it often happened with reference to the articles sent to Hans von Wolzogen, the editor of the *Bayreuther Blätter*, that Wagner did not see them till after they had appeared in print, and was taken by surprise. In the case of the Schumann article, likewise, he did not take the initiative. Joseph Rubinstein, who was pursuing his studies in Bayreuth at that time (and who is not related to the two great Rubinsteins), occasionally picked up stray remarks that Wagner dropped in conversation, and which he only half understood. These undigested remarks he worked up into an article which Wagner found to be as indigestible as others did. Bismarck exclaimed once that a German fears no one but God. Well, was not Wagner, too, a man who might have said that every day in his life? If he had entertained the ideas on Schumann which are embodied in that article he would most certainly have put them down in his own name, without borrowing the pen of a dyspeptic musician."*

* I have also a letter from Hans von Wolzogen, which confirms the substance of Anton Seidl's letter.



FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY EUGENE

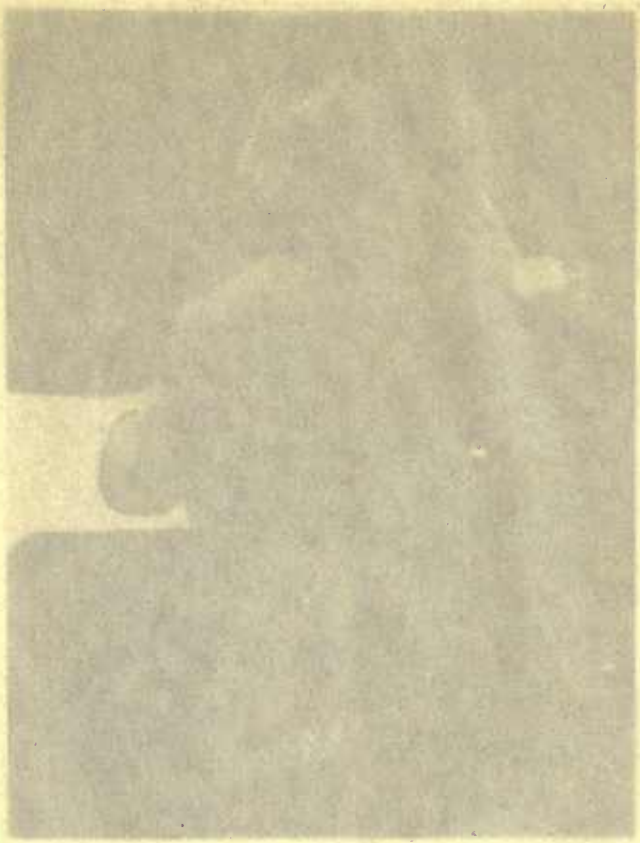
ON CONDUCTING*

BY ANTON SEIDL

CONDUCTING! A subject, truly, concerning which much might be written, yet scarcely anything of real importance is to be found in books. Gripped by the misconception of his works by conductors, Richard Wagner once took up the pen to expose some of the most grievous offences against his intentions. But he did not give a clear idea. A few guides, or "Complete Conductors," have appeared in print, but these, it is to be hoped, are no longer taken seriously. The explanation of the fact that so little has been written about conducting is exceedingly simple and evident. The ability to conduct is a gift of God with which few have been endowed in full measure. Those who possess only a little of the gift cannot even sense it, and those who have it to abund-ance do not wish to write, for to them the talent seems so natural a thing that they cannot see the need of discussing it. This is the kernel of the whole matter. If you have the divine gift within you, you can conduct; and if you have it not, you will never be able to acquire it. Those who have been endowed with the gift are conductors, the others are time-beaters.

Happy were the composers who were in a position to bring their own works forward, as did Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Berlioz, Mendelssohn, and, on occasion, Wagner and Liszt in Dresden, Weimar, and Bayreuth. Later, when theatres, concert-rooms, and orchestras sprang up in all directions, where the cultivation of music became more and more general, the importance of conductors grew to dimensions never before dreamed of. The composers could no longer direct all performances in per-

* From *The Music of the Modern Poets*. Edited by Arthur Todd. Fleming H. Revell Co. Copyright, 1895, by H. Ingersoll Co.



Anton Seidl Conducting

1895

ON CONDUCTING*

BY ANTON SEIDL

CONDUCTING! A subject, truly, concerning which much might be written, yet scarcely anything of real importance is to be found in books. Urged by the misconception of his works by conductors, Richard Wagner once took up the pen to expose some of the most grievous offences against his intentions. Berlioz also gave a few hints. A few guides, or "Complete Conductors," have appeared in print, but these, it is to be hoped, are no longer taken seriously. The explanation of the fact that so little has been written about conducting is exceedingly simple and natural. The ability to conduct is a gift of God with which few have been endowed in full measure. Those who possess only a little of the gift cannot write about it, and those who have it in abundance do not wish to write, for to them the talent seems so natural a thing that they cannot see the need of discussing it. This is the kernel of the whole matter. If you have the divine gift within you, you can conduct; and if you have it not, you will never be able to acquire it. Those who have been endowed with the gift are conductors, the others are time-beaters.

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* From *The Music of the Modern World.* Edited by Anton Seidl, Fannie Morris Smith, H. E. Krehbiel and W. S. Howard. Copyrighted, 1895, by D. Appleton & Co.

son, and so the responsibility of interpreting their works in the spirit in which they had been conceived was placed upon conductors. But music went forward with such gigantic strides, great composers followed one after the other so rapidly, that it became obvious that there was a lack of men to whom had been given the conductor's gift. There was not even time thoroughly to assimilate the great compositions, and the traditional manner of performing them was lost. Tradition, that confessed screen of ignorance and impotence, became a myth and served as an excuse for time-beaters who lacked the gift. There are still time-beaters of this description who have survived the earlier period, but their screen is worn threadbare.

Now we see approach a younger generation free from prejudice, innocent of tradition, thrown upon their own resources, but conscious of the divine spark within them. The young men plunge joyfully into the whirlpool of study, pry deeply into the mysteries of the gigantic works reserved for them, plunge into the spectral world inhabited by music's heroes, receive the consecrating greetings of the masters, and give new life to the things which they have found and felt. They have made their influence tell; a refreshing, invigorating breeze blows through the corridors of music. Among the apostles of the Church each had his own way of teaching, his own way of proclaiming the gospel, but all brought blessings to mankind. Up then, young men—up to your great task! Have you looked upon the faces of our teachers? Proclaim it! Have you grasped their Titanic thoughts, deciphered their mystic hieroglyphs? Proclaim the fact! Have you received God's gift of conducting? How many time-beaters are there among you? Away with them! for Edison could, if he would, invent an apparatus that would be much more precise.

Let me direct your attention, young men with the divine gift, to a thing which most of you seem to ignore, or to have never dreamed of. You may know Wagner's work never so well by heart, you may have studied and conducted Berlioz, the other Frenchmen, and modern Italians (not excepting the classic Verdi) never so successfully, your model performances shall still be incomplete if you do not understand the art of blending the scenic action with the music and song. Most of you are too exclusively musicians. You direct your efforts almost wholly to the working out of details. The result is a good musical performance, but frequently, nevertheless, one that breeds constant misunderstandings and confusion, because it is not in harmony with the scenic action. The public hears one thing and sees another. The secret of a performance correct in style and perfectly understood—the only proper performance, in short—is a complete blending of stage, orchestra, machinery, light effects, singers, conductor, stage hands, chorus—of everything that contributes to the representation. It is, therefore, my own belief, based upon experience, that he is the most successful and effective conductor —in other words, he is the real conductor from the composer's point of view—who is as thoroughly versed in the technical science of the stage as he is in music. Long before the stage rehearsals began at Bayreuth the master, Wagner, said to me: "My boy, you must help me on the stage, behind the scenes. You and your colleague Fischer (now Hofkapellmeister in Munich) must assume responsibility on the stage for everything that has anything to do with the music—that is, you must act as a sort of musical stage-manager. You will see the importance of this yourself, and you will find that it will be of infinite effect upon your future as a conductor." Later we were joined by Mottl (now director of the Court Opera at Carlsruhe), and

naturally we undertook the unique work with tremendous enthusiasm. Wagner was wont playfully to call us his three Rhine-daughters, for the first rehearsal under his care was devoted to the first scene of *Das Rheingold*. I was in charge of the first wagon which carried Lilli Lehmann who sang the part of Woglinde. Little did I suspect that in after years Lilli would sing the part of Brünnhilde under my direction. Mottl managed the second wagon with Marie Lehmann, and Fischer the third with Fräulein Lammert, of Berlin. These machines we were obliged to drag hither and thither, raising and lowering the singers meanwhile for six hours the first rehearsal. The master was tired out and we three could scarcely move leg or arm; but the one rehearsal sufficed to make me understand what Wagner had said to me, and its bearing on my future. I learned to know the meaning of every phrase, every violin figure, every sixteenth note. I learned, too, how it was possible with the help of the picture and action to transform an apparently insignificant violin passage into an incident, and to lift a simple horn call into a thing of stupendous significance by means of scenic emphasis.

But, it will be urged, all this is indicated in the score; all that is necessary is to carry out the printed directions. But they are not carried out, and if, perchance, there comes a stage manager of the better class—who understands and respects the wishes of the composer—it happens only too often that he is not musical enough to bring about the union of picture and music at the right time and place. The swimming of the Rhine-daughters is carried out very well at most of the larger theatres, but the movements of the nixies do not illustrate the accompanying music. Frequently the fair one rises while a descending violin passage is playing, and again to the music of hurried upward passages she sinks gently to the bottom of the

river. Neither is it a matter of indifference whether the movements of the Rhine-daughters be fast or slow. At a majority of the theatres this is treated as a matter of no consequence, regardless of the fact that the public are utterly bewildered by such contradictions between what they see and what they hear. Wagner often said to me, "My dear friend, give your attention to the stage, following my scenic directions, and you will hit the right thing in the music without a question." This, you will observe, is the very opposite of what you young conductors are doing to-day. I remember on one occasion hearing the break of a lightning flash *ritardando* in the orchestra, while on the stage the bolt was indicated surprisingly well. This was in the beginning of *Die Walküre*. The musician (or better, perhaps, the educated time-beater) aimed to meddle with Nature's performance of her own trade by introducing his nicely-executed *ritardando*, but succeeded only in proving that the stage hand who manipulated the lightning had more intelligence than he. If the musician had kept his eyes on the stage instead of on the score he would have seen his blunder, he would have become a more careful observer of natural phenomena.

Another case: In the first scene of *Die Walküre* between Siegmund, Sieglinde and afterwards Hunding, there are a great number of little interludes—dainty, simple, and melodic in manner. Now, if the conductor is unable to explain the meaning of these little interludes to the singers, he cannot associate them with the requisite gestures, changes of facial expression and even steps, and the scene is bound to make a painfully monotonous impression. No effect is possible here with the music alone. Let me also moot a question of the greatest importance to all performances in their external effect—the question of tempi. It is simple nonsense to speak of the fixed tempo of any particular

vocal phrase. Each voice has its peculiarities. One singer has a soft, flexible voice to which distinct enunciation is easy ; another has a heavy, metallic voice which sometimes requires a longer period for its full development, or is compelled to sing a phrase slower than the other, in order to achieve the same dramatic effect and distinctness. It was Wagner's habit to study and test the voices placed at his disposal, so as to discover the means which must be employed to make them reach the purpose designed. His tempo marks, so far as they refer to the voice, are warnings against absolutely false conceptions—not rigid prescriptions—for time-beaters who follow them would be obliged to force the most varied organs into one unyielding mold. Of course, the liberty thus given must not be abused, but used with wisdom and discretion for the securing of distinctness. The admonition which Wagner gave over and over again was, " Be distinct ; speak and sing clearly ; the little notes are the most important ones, the big ones will take care of themselves ; always be distinct and the rest will follow of its own accord." These are golden words which every conductor ought always to keep in view, even while conducting orchestral compositions.

Another thing : Do not let your singers scream. This everlasting forcing of the voice seems to have become almost the second nature of German singers. We scarcely ever hear on the stage nowadays, *Blick ich umher in diesem edlen Kreise* in a dreamy, restrained tone, or a poetical, ethereal *O du mien holder Abendstern !* or a whispered *Lass ich's verlauten lös ich dann nicht meines Willen's haltenden Haft* (Wotan), or a playful *Du hörst nicht drauf, so sprich doch jetzt, hast mir's ja selbst in den Kopf gesetzt* murmured into the ear of Eva. All this is sung with full voice, as if the purpose were to sing everybody else to death. Listen to the representations of Wotan if you want to hear how

they ignore Wagner's frequent injunction, "To be sung in almost totally suppressed tone," or to the Walther von Stolzings and hear them scream the wondrous passages in the Prize Song, *Dort unter einem Wunderbaum*, or *Dort unter einem Lorbeerbaum*, which are marked "As if in a complete ecstacy" and "piano." Nor does it occur to them to retard the tempo a trifle. Everything is sung as if it were made over one and the same last. Moreover, our Brünnhildes utilize the passage *War es so schmählich was ich verbrach* for exhibition purposes as if to rebuke, as early as possible, Wagner's injunction, "To be begun timidly." The manner in which the scene of the Nornir is given, if at all, is simply laughable and scandalous. Similar offences against Wagner might be adduced by the bookful. The scenic arrangements, or rather disarrangements, are so outrageous that one asks whether it is manifold stupidity or culpable carelessness with which one is called on to deal. As matters stand at present help is only to be expected from conductors who have the divine gift. Stage managers will not become more musical, and hence conductors must devote themselves more to the stage that the purposes of the composers may be better realized. Conductors who successfully study the stage will be able to do something more for the singers than to drum the notes of their parts into their heads. Moreover, it would seem to be the duty of conductors to acquire a better and more refined taste in phrasing. Of course, there must exist a natural talent for this also, but one may benefit very much by frequent hearing of really great singers and by persistent study. The German singers of to-day have no idea how much they mislead and bore people when they persist in singing "straight from the shoulder," as is their favorite fashion. Unless the conductor wisely interferes here the notion—not altogether false—

that the Germans do not know how to sing will take long-enduring root to the great injury of the German dramatic art. I have often heard the statement made by foreign singers, as a demonstrated fact, that the German artists are artists in feeling indeed, and serious in their devotion, but that their singing is crude. I am almost forced to agree to this view. On the other hand, I have heard from a German colleague of Jean de Reszke derogatory remarks concerning that tenor. I give the assurance that there was much for the German to learn from the great Jean, especially his wonderful art of phrasing and his tasteful declamation. The criticism of his colleague only proved that he had no ear for phrasing. All who were closely associated with Wagner remember how impressively and with what a variety of voices he was able to sing the different rôles for those who had been chosen to interpret them, and how marvelously he phrased them all. It is also known, alas! how few artists are able to imitate him. It always makes me sad when I think of how I saw Wagner wasting his vitality, not only by singing their parts to some of his artists, but acting out the smallest details, and of how few they were who were responsive to his wishes. Those who can recall the rehearsals for *The Ring of the Nibelung* and afterwards *Parsifal*, at Bayreuth, will agree with me that much was afterwards forgotten which had laboriously to be thought out in part later, in which work Madame Cosima Wagner was wonderfully helpful. But only the few initiated know how many of Wagner's days were wasted in useless study with different Siegfrieds, Hagens, Hundings, Sieglindes, etc. I also wish to recall the rehearsals for *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, in Vienna, in 1875. Then his was the task of creating a Tannhäuser out of a bad Raoul, of forming a Telramund out of a singer to whom had never been assigned a half-important rôle; and yet when,

after a fair degree of success, Wagner asked for consideration on the ground that he had had to do the best he could with existing material, the critics fell upon him like a flock of wolves and dogs as a mark of gratitude for his self-sacrificing exertions.

But how about conducting? some may ask. As I said before, it is a gift of God. A talented man can learn the technics of the art in a few days; one without talent, never! Men like Bülow and Tausig took the stand and conducted without having made any technical studies; they had the gift. Hans Richter was a horn player in the orchestra of the Vienna Opera House when he came to Wagner to copy scores and rehearse their parts with the singers. Wagner sent him to Munich to drill the chorus in *Die Meistersinger;* then, after the departure of Von Bülow, he undertook the production of *Das Rheingold,* but a disagreement with the management prevented the performance. Enough; he conducted without previous lessons in conducting. I myself, though I made earnest studies of Beethoven and Wagner with Richter never was troubled with technical practice in conducting. I went to Leipsic as Kapellmeister, and out of hand conducted *Der Freischütz, Titus, The Flying Dutchman, Tannhäuser,* and *The Ring of the Nibelung.* Thus Sucher, Mottl, Weingartner, Strauss, Mahler, and others began, and in greater or less degree they all possess the divine gift. Of course, experience strengthens one later. For instance, once in Munich I saw Levi conduct recitatives so admirably, with such remarkable precision, that I at once adopted his method of beating in similar passages. This may seem a small matter at first blush, as the difference between it and the methods of others is scarcely noticeable, but it is a great help to precision and at the same time it promotes elasticity in the orchestra.

The conductor's gift does not always go hand in hand with

that of composition; indeed, the union is found much more seldom than is popularly believed. Nor is it associated always with general musical learning. Composers are not all good conductors. Saint-Saens is one of the best of musicians; there is no orchestral score that he cannot read at the pianoforte with ease; but as a conductor he has difficulty in making himself intelligible to the orchestra. Massenet, admirable as an orchestral technician and master of the larger forms in music, is nothing as conductor. Schumann, as is generally known, played a mournful part when he stood before an orchestra. Berlioz was a marvellous conductor of his own works, but *nil* as an interpreter of the compositions of others. Liszt and his musicians were frequently in entirely different regions while he was conducting. On the other hand, Mendelssohn was a fine—perhaps a too fine—conductor; but Raff was frightful. Tschaikowsky discovered himself here in New York as a fiery, inspiring conductor of his own music. But many composers—Verdi, for example—would do well to leave the performance of their works wholly in the hands of capable conductors.

It is not the purpose of this article to teach conducting, but only to make some general observations on the subject. Musical practice is too young an art in America to warrant a search for men with a conductor's gift. The art will have to become much more stable before such talents can arise. But when music shall be generally considered a real public necessity there will be no need to worry about conductors of the right kind; on the contrary, we shall be amazed at the sound appreciation, the natural talent which America will disclose. The musical bent of the Americans is retarded in its development partly by social conditions, partly by the need of premature money-earning. Here is a field of activity for wealthy philan-

thropists. America does not need gorgeous halls and concert rooms for its musical development, but music schools with competent teachers, and many, very many, free scholarships for talented young disciples who are unable to pay the expense of study. To this subject I shall again recur.

II

WE are unable to say with exactitude when and by whom the bâton was introduced in the conducting of musical performances. It is held by some that it was Mendelssohn, in Leipsic, and by others that it was Carl Maria von Weber, in Dresden, who first conducted with a bâton and thereby caused something of a sensation. Before then it was the principal violin, or so-called *Concertmeister*, who gave the signal with a violin bow to begin, and in the course of a performance kept the players together by occasional gestures or a few raps upon his desk. In choral performances the organist or pianoforte player was the conductor of the choir, and the principal violin the conductor of the orchestra. In Vienna it was the custom to have even a third conductor who, at choral performances of magnitude, beat time with a roll of paper. It can easily be imagined that with such a triumvirate things were frequently at sixes and sevens.

It may safely be assumed that as soon as musical compositions grew in depth, in boldness and grandeur, the necessity was felt of enlisting a single individual who should be responsible for the correct interpretation of the work and the proper conduct of the whole. This was but the natural logic of the case. The art of music differs greatly from all other arts. The painter conceives an idea and executes it on canvas; there it is embodied for long periods of time; everyone can admire it in the original

just as the painter himself created it. The sculptor conceives an idea and executes it in marble; everyone can admire it in the original, just as the sculptor himself created it. The poet is already in a worse plight; he conceives an idea, puts it upon paper, and leaves it to posterity; his creation is now either re-created in the intelligent mind of the reader, or it takes possession of the elocutionist, in which case it depends entirely upon his capacity, or want of capacity, whether or not it shall achieve the effect contemplated. In a third case it must be turned over to a group of actors, who give it life under the direction of a stage manager; in what a variety of phases this life may disclose itself we can learn by attending performances of the same drama in different cities or theatres. How many readings are there of Hamlet's "To be, or not to be"? Perhaps as many as there are actors who play Hamlet. Where, then, shall we look for the original meaning of a poem, for that which the poet conceived and executed? Only to the paper. We must discern the spirit of the poem and bring it back to life.

Now take the case of the musician. He conceives his idea and records it. But how much larger is the apparatus which he requires for the production of his work than that of the other creative artists! Singers who are also actors (if possible), and who must have musical training (which is not always the case); musicians who can play the necessary instruments; stage machinists; painters for the scenery; perhaps a comely young ballet (an arduous requirement, indeed!); a capable choir (one that ought to sing in tune); a stage manager to direct all the doings behind the scenes; finally, a conductor who really ought to be as musical as the composer himself (that is surely asking a good deal!).

To recur to the history of the bâton, it may be asserted

that as the difficulties connected with performances increased, as compositions grew in magnitude, and matters went more and more awry under the direction of the principal violin (aided by his assistant with the paper roll), the plan was gradually evolved of putting everything in the care of one man and holding him responsible for the results. And thus the modern conductor came into office, armed at first with the old roll of paper but later with a bâton. Some of the old violin-players, like Spohr in Cassel and Habeneck in Paris, clung to the violin bow; but as has already been said, the modern concert conductor is found wielding a bâton, in the case of Mendelssohn, the modern theatre conductor in that of Weber; and so it remains to-day.

The art-work created by the composer must be reanimated, inspired with new life by the conductor's intellectual abilities, his technical powers, and his recreative capacity. How much self-criticism, how much energy, how much love for the work, how much study, how much mental exertion are necessary to enable him satisfactorily to fill his reproductive office! The conductor stands in the stead of the composer. A gifted conductor brings it to pass through the medium of rehearsals that every participant, be he singer or player, feels that he too is a recreative artist, that he too is leading and directing, though he is but following the bâton. It is this unconscious reproduction, apparently from original impulse on the part of the performer, which is the secret agency whose influence the conductor must exert by the force of his personality. A true conductor will effect all this at the rehearsals, and keep himself as inconspicuous as possible at the performances; in this lies the difference between a time-beater and a conductor. There are time-beaters who wave wildly with their hands and stamp loudly with their feet, yet they accomplish little or nothing. Of course, the temperament

and other individual characteristics of a conductor have much to do with the case. Years ago, before the opera had taken on so much of an international character, its repertory was more restricted, and the conductor had to struggle with a much smaller variety of styles. Proch, in Vienna, was a famous Meyerbeer conductor; Esser, in the same city, a respected Mozart and Gluck conductor. For their *stagione* the Italians sent out their best *maestri;* thus Spontini came to Berlin, and was long the supreme power at the opera in that city. His best achievements were made, naturally enough, in his own operas. He used two bâtons in conducting—a short one for the arias, duets, etc., and a very long one for the big choruses and pageants with stage bands. It is only natural, of course, that Italians should be the best conductors of Italian opera, Germans of German, and Frenchmen of French. Of late years much more than used to be wont is asked of our conductors. Theatres whose means do not allow the luxury of more than one conductor, demand of their musical director that he work to-day in the Lortzing smithy, mount the funeral pyre to-morrow with Siegfried, and be incarcerated in a madhouse with Lucia the next day. I do not believe in such versatility; conductors are only human, and either Lucia or Siegfried will have to suffer. It is an unhealthy state of affairs, and in the best of cases the public will be the loser.

Let us now consider the concert conductor. He, too, has a great deal of intellectual and physical work to do while preparing a performance. The majority of the public have no idea of the extent of this work, for they assume that the better the orchestra the lighter the labor. To an extent this is indeed true; but to evolve a picture of magnitude and completeness out of an overture or symphony requires nevertheless a vast intellectual

effort. There are conductors who seek to bewilder by finished elaboration of detail, leaving the picture as a whole without proportion or perspective. Their accomplishment is like that of a painter who lays stress upon a magnificent piece of drapery, a single figure, or a particular light effect, to the injury of the general impression. The elaboration of detail is felt to be unessential, but it distracts attention from the main theme. How often does a conductor err in the gradation of colors! Very often it is the size of the room and its acoustic qualities that are to blame for the fact that the means adopted to carry out his idea, the means in which his orchestra has been drilled, produce an effect almost diametrically opposite to his intentions. The larger the room the broader must be his *tempi* to be understood in all parts of the house. The better the acoustics of the room the easier will be the conductor's task, the more pliant the orchestra. To illustrate: I brought forward *Tristan und Isolde* in New York in the season of 1895–96, after the most careful preparation. The orchestral colors were adjusted for Jean and Edouard de Reszke and Madame Nordica, whose voices were always heard through the instrumental surge, as ought to be the case in every respectable performance of a Wagnerian drama. At the Auditorium in Chicago I was obliged to tone down the volume of the same admirable orchestra nearly one-half, because I discovered that the acoustics of the Auditorium were so excellent that the dynamic volume employed in New York would have drowned the singers beyond hope of rescue. The orchestra sounded magical, and the performance revolutionized the ideas of all the artists. In order to make clear the precarious position in which a conductor sometimes finds himself, I must add that I called the orchestra together on the morning of the day of performance, in order to explain the acoustic conditions of the

room. I rehearsed nothing; had I begun, I should have been obliged to play all the music. The men understood my explanation, and in the evening played with an insinuating delicacy, with such a nice adjustment of tone that to hear them was a marvel, and one would have thought that they had spent years of study in the Auditorium. Now it is true that this was an exhibition of a high degree of intelligence on the part of the orchestra, but without the quick recognition of conditions on the part of the conductor the performance would nevertheless have resulted differently.

I must now reiterate that since musical compositions, whether through the influence of Wagner or any other master, have grown to be more homogeneous and profound in their content—have, in a word, gained in delineative purpose—the relation of the conductor toward the orchestra has also grown more significant. The best orchestra in the world will make but a fleeting if not an utterly insignificant impression in the hands of an inefficient conductor. The period of orchestral virtuosity, in which the whole aim was daintiness, refinement, and precision of execution, is past. Already in his day Weber declared war against metronomical orchestra playing. After long and thorough study I am profoundly convinced that had Beethoven not become deaf he would have demonstrated by his conducting how insufficient his *tempo* and expression marks are for the correct interpretation of his symphonies. Weber said that there was no composition throughout which one measure was to be played like the other. True, otherwise it would be but machine work. Is it possible to conceive of a Beethoven who wished to have the works of his second and third creative periods performed without a bit of freedom in melody or change of mood? Naturally, there must be no dissection on the part of the conductor, and

the freedom of movement which is exercised must not be permitted to disarrange the picture as a whole. Any man who found it possible to conduct the "Pastoral" or Fifth Symphony in strict metronomic time, or the Ninth without variation in the *tempo*, ought to put down his bâton at once and become a traveling salesman for the Æolian or electric pianos.

If it is difficult for the concert conductor, who has only the one agency—the orchestra—to control, to carry out the aims of the composer, it is much more difficult for the opera conductor, who must manage the many solo singers and the chorus with all their difficult tasks, collective and individual, mutual and independent. It is the gigantic task of the conductor to inform all these varied agents with the intentions of the composer, to interweave the orchestral part with theirs, and to graduate the instrumental sounds so that the action may present itself clearly and easily to the listener. Here let me say, from the conductor's point of view, that it is surely the purpose of the composer to have his stage-folk understood by the public. It follows, then, that the orchestra must never shriek and drown the voices of the singers, but support them. The orchestra ought always to bear in mind that on the stage above there is a man with something to say, which the sixty or eighty men below must support so that every tone and word shall be heard and understood. The composer did not write an orchestra part in order that it might drown the words sung on the stage. Wagner, even when conducting excerpts from his operas, was painfully anxious that every syllable of the singer should be heard. Frequently at the close of a vocal phrase he would arrest the sound of the orchestra for a moment, in order that the final syllable should not be covered up. How often did he call out angrily, "*Kinder*, you are killing my poetry!"

How discouraging must be the effect upon an intelligent singer to feel that, in spite of every exertion, he is being drowned by the orchestra! Thoughtless musicians, speaking of my production of *Tristan und Isolde* one year, expressed the opinion that I had supplied the work with more delicate tints than usual, only for the sake of Jean de Reszke and Nordica. This only proves how many musicians there are who still cannot understand the chief thing in an opera. In rehearsing *Tristan* I did not change a single note or expression mark, but only carried out what the composer had written down, and gave effect to the vocal and orchestral parts in their true complementary values. I am flattered to know that I achieved the desired and prescribed success, for it was the general verdict that every word was understood from beginning to end; that was my wish, and that should be the wish and the accomplishment of every conductor.

A conductor must impress strongly upon his orchestra that there are different kinds of *fortes*. A *forte* from the strings differs from a trombone or trumpet *forte*. Now the *forte* of the singer is always the same, but the accompaniment varies. It follows of necessity that a trombone *forte* in an accompaniment cannot have the same intensity as a viola *forte*. Is not that obvious? Consequently there is a vocal *forte* and an instrumental *forte*. Take, for instance, Isolde's death scene in *Tristan*, or the great love duet in the second act of the same drama; if the conductor does not differentiate there between the *fortes* of the orchestra and the *fortes* of the singers, the latter will be hopelessly lost, and the listeners will say, and rightly: "Wagner is a barbarian; he ruins the human voice." But what they ought to say is, "The conductor had better take to the road and sell electric pianos." A Chicago critic essayed to rebuke me by

saying that in Berlin, when I was younger, I had permitted the orchestra to play much louder in *The Ring of the Nibelung*. Now that I had grown older and made the orchestra play more softly, he concluded that I had lost my youthful vigor. I am glad that I have come to my present insight into Wagner's music, and if it would redound to the advantage of that music I should wish every conductor my own decrepitude. One thing, however, I know, and that is, that my performances seldom lacked clearness and distinctness, though I willingly admit that I have gained experience with years, and feel that I could afford to yield up some of my senility for the refreshment of younger colleagues.

But we must continue to prove by examples the importance of the conductor in the musical life of to-day. Look for a moment at the prelude to *Die Meistersinger*, which Wagner himself conducted long years ago at a Gewandhaus concert in Leipsic, winning great success. Immediately afterward Reinecke conducted a performance of the same work by the same orchestra. It was rejected, but won appreciation later when directed by others. In Vienna, Wagner conducted the overture to *Der Freischütz* and evoked frantic applause. Then came Dessoff, and gave the overture with the same orchestra, remarking beforehand, " Now we will play the overture in the Wagnerian style." And yet it was not at all the same thing. Last year one and the same symphony was played in New York by three different orchestras under three different conductors. I do not wish to discuss the relative value of the instrumental bodies, but simply to remind those who heard the concerts of the difference between the performances of the conductors—a difference which lay in the nature of the case, for each conductor had a conception of his own. But the question is, Which of the three came nearest

to the idea of the composer?—for he who did made beyond all peradventure the best effect with the symphony. This attitude of the conductor to the composition is daily becoming more significant, for the composers of to-day are more and more putting thought into their compositions; the conviction is growing steadily that the proper order of things is first to think, then to compose, and then to perform.

Even operas are being more carefully thought out than formerly. Look at the Italians now, and see how they strive to adapt their music to the original text! For this, thanks are due to that grand old man Verdi, who pointed out the way to his young colleagues, and set them an example in his *Otello* and *Falstaff*.

When Wagner calls out to the conductor, "Recognize first of all the idea: the meaning of a phrase and the relation of the phrase or motive to the action, and the proper reading and *tempo* will disclose themselves of their own accord," he goes straight to the very root of the matter. Look again to *Tristan und Isolde* for an example. A large space of time in the first act is occupied by Isolde and Brangaene, who are alone in the tent. A few motives are continually developed, but with what a variety must they be treated—surging up now stormily, impetuously; sinking back sadly, exhausted, anon threatening, then timid, now in eager haste, now reassuring! For such a variety of expression the few indications, *ritardando*, *accelerando*, and *a tempo* do not suffice; it is necessary to live through the action of the drama in order to make it all plain. The composer says, "With variety"—a meagre injunction for the conductor. Therefore I add, "Feel with the characters, ponder with them, experience with them all the devious outbursts of passion, but remain distinct always!" That is the duty of a conductor. If in addition

the conductor is able to grasp and hold the play in its totality, to combine all the singers into a single striking picture, he will not need to wait till the next day for a recompense of praise; he may have the reward of satisfaction with himself at once. It is his artistic achievement to have lived through, to have himself experienced the drama. In the third act of the same work he must suffer with Tristan, feel his pains, follow him step for step through his delirious wanderings.

That conductor is an offender who ruins the picture by blurring its outlines by playing too loudly, or destroys its pliancy by an unyielding beat. Think of the exciting task presented by the scene of Tristan on his deathbed! The conductor must be ever at his heels. Every measure, every cry must agree with the orchestra. If the singer one day sings a measure only a shade differently than usual, or begins or ends a *rallentando* or *accelerando* one measure earlier or later—an entirely natural thing to do—the conductor must be on hand with his orchestra, that the picture may not be distorted or blurred. He must have the brush of the composer and his colors always ready—in a word, he must live, suffer, and die with the singer, else he is an offender against art.

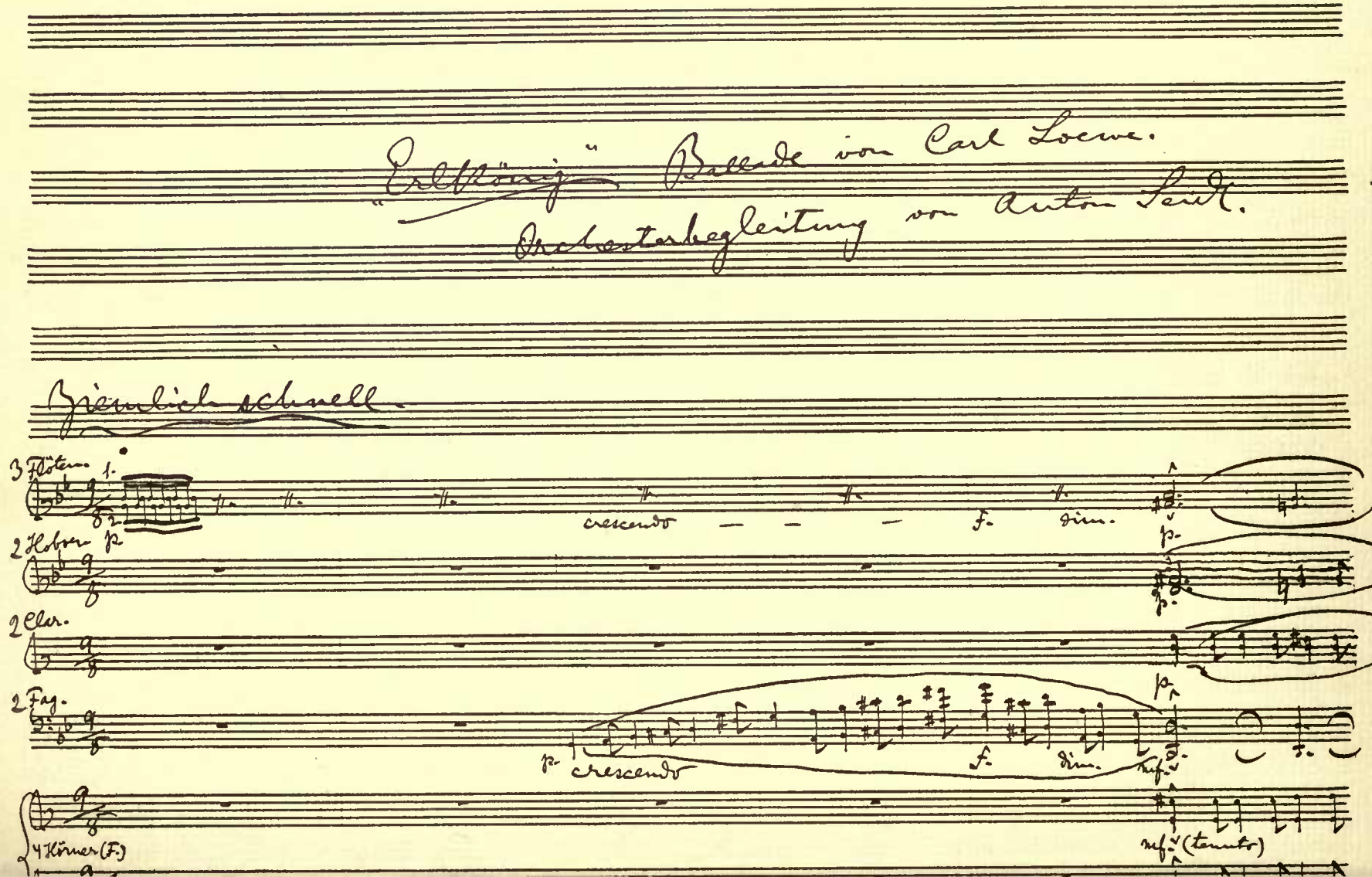
Here let me call attention to a singular phenomenon, which seems somewhat startling at first blush but which cannot be gainsaid. The performances of conductors are frequently criticised in great haste and with much harshness. Take, for instance, an overture or symphony by Beethoven and have it conducted by three or four really great conductors. Immediately comparisons will be made: one will be preferred and the others condemned without mercy. This is all wrong, for it is possible that one and the same subject shall be treated differently by different masters, yet each treatment have an effective and an individual

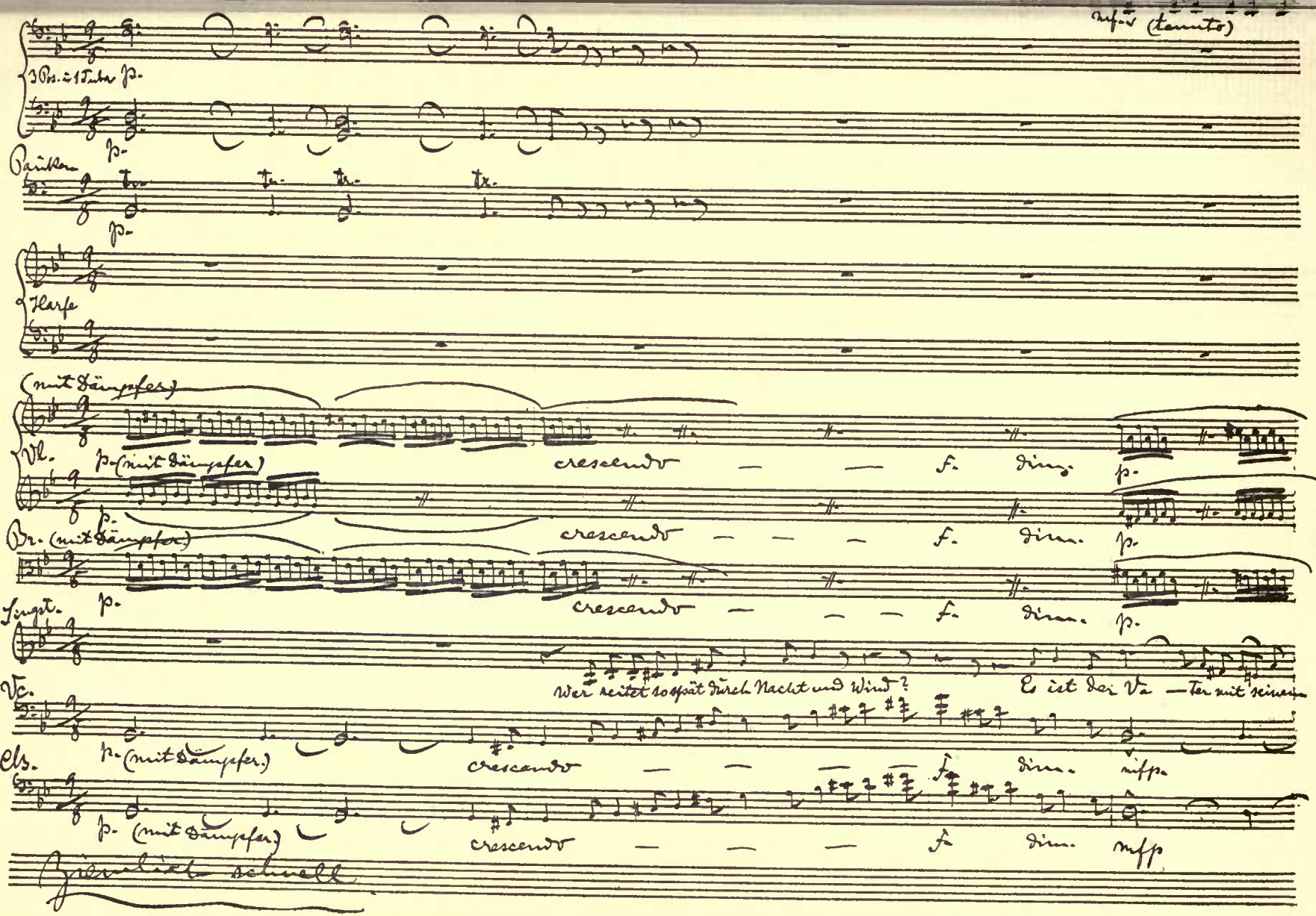
physiognomy in its way. Different painters and poets can use the same material, each in his own manner, and each produce an art-work of value. How many pictures of Christ are there in existence? Each Christ head painted by a great master differs from all others; yet each is a classic for all that. In a musical performance I should first inquire whether or not the conductor has anything to say, whether there is definite meaning in his proclamation, especially if it should produce a different effect upon me from a reading based on an entirely different conception, and give a plain exposition of the conductor's purposes and ideas. If the variations consist of empty external details, then away with them, no matter how prettily empty they may sound. There is less likelihood of such a state of things, since action and train of thought are prescribed; and the instances are not many even in symphonic music, but they may occur.

In conclusion, I wish to make a few observations on three great musicians who were pioneers in their art and frequently appeared in the capacity of conductors. They are Berlioz, Liszt, and Wagner. Berlioz was a keen observer; he frequently wrote music so appropriate to the dramatic or poetical idea as to be obvious to everybody—as, for instance, the storm scene in *Les Troyens*, the ball and execution scenes in the "Fantastic Symphony," the march of pilgrims in the "Harold Symphony," the Mephistopheles scenes and the Ride to Hell in "La Damnation de Faust," and many other pieces. Only a real genius could have done these things. It is true that these startlingly accurate delineations sprang from his enormous knowledge of orchestral technique rather than from his soul, though it is not to be denied that Berlioz often invented strangely beautiful and effective melodies. His musical pyrotechnics are frequently of

"ERL KÖNIG" BALLADE VON CARL LOEWE

FAC-SIMILE OF ANTON SEIDL'S ORIGINAL MS.




2 Pos. a 1 Tuba
Pauken
Harfe
(mit Dämpfer)
Vl.
Br. (mit Dämpfer)
Singt.
Wer reitet so spät durch Nacht und Wind?
Es ist der Va — ter mit sei
Vc.
Cls.
crescendo
dim.
Ziemlich schnell

the most dazzling order. As conductor of his own compositions he was incomparable. Cosima Wagner has often related that he brought to his rehearsals a tremendous command of the minutiæ of orchestral technics, a wonderful ear for delicate effects and tonal beauty, and an irresistible power of command. Upon all who heard or played under him he exerted an ineradicable influence. His music, frequently rugged in contrasts and daring leaps, is also insinuating and suave at times, and so, too, was his conducting: one moment he would be high in air, the next crouched under his desk; one moment he would menace the bass drummer, and the next flatter the flutist; now he would draw long threads of sound out of the violinists, and anon lunge through the air at the double basses, or with some daring remark help the violoncellists to draw a *cantilena* full of love-longing out of their thick-bellied instruments. His musicians feared him and his demoniac, sarcastic face, and wriggled to escape unscathed from his talons.

Liszt, the founder of the Symphonic Poem, was differently organized. The dashing, energetic Hungarian, who had developed into a man of the world in the *salons* of Paris, was always lofty and noble in his undertakings. He was singularly good-hearted, excessively charitable, unselfish, and ready with aid, intrepid, sometimes to his own harm, persistent in the prosecution of his aims, quickly and enthusiastically responsive to all beautiful things, and ready at once to fight for them through thick and thin. Thus we see him in Weimar, the first to throw down the gage to envy and stupidity in behalf of the Wagnerian art-drama, and never growing weary. He was the first Wagnerian conductor, and battled with bâton and pen for the musical drama at a time when few believed in it. He was the first to recognize Wagner's genius and bow to the reforming force of the new musical dispen-

sation. His recognition of the new era gave him the idea of the Symphonic Poem, and so he became in the concert room what Wagner was on the stage. Liszt also introduced the reforms into his sacred and secular oratorios, and their influence disclosed itself as well in the conductor's office. His Jovian countenance filled everybody with a sort of holy dread; his colabourers were lifted to the top of a lofty pedestal; all were profoundly, majestically moved, inspired, and made conscious of a high mission. Liszt radiated an exalted magic on singers as well as instrumentalists. He felt himself to be an apostle of art, whose duty and privilege it was to preach love, faith, and respect eternal in all his deeds as conductor, and his feelings were shared with him by performers and listeners. By means of his priestly appearance and dignity, and his consuming enthusiasm for everything noble, he carried with him irresistibly all who came into contact with him. He compelled all to love and believe in the composition he brought forward. If Berlioz left behind him a demoniac impression, Liszt disseminated light and celestial consecration; one felt himself in a better world.

Wagner was a union of the other two. To him both heaven and hell were open. He delineated the sense-distracting pleasures of the realm of Venus in glowing colors, plunged into the most awful depths of the sea, and brought up ghostly ships; he opened to us vistas of the legendary and misty land of the Holy Grail; now he draws us with him on a nocturnal promenade through the streets of Nuremberg, and buffets the master singers and the petty town clerk; anon he discloses the nameless suffering and endless longing of two lovers who are being drawn unconsciously by the power of magic into the land of eternal darkness and night, there to be united in bliss everlasting. Next he plays in the Rhine with its nixies, calls up the lumbering

giants, the nimble dwarfs, the stately gods, rides into battle with the daughters of Wotan, rambles through forests to the twitterings of birds, till he reaches the cavern smithy, forges swords, strides through the flickering flame to awaken a heroic maiden, returns to the Rhine, overwhelms the race of gods, and predicts the coming of that which shall endure forever—the love of woman. At the close of his glorious life and labor he leaves us the most precious of treasures—the Holy Grail and Holy Lance—as tokens of Faith, Love, and Hope. Did ever a human intellect bequeath to the world such a wealth of ideas, suggestions, and teachings before? We cannot imagine the time when knowledge of these things shall be complete and closed, for the more they are studied the greater are the treasures discovered.

As a conductor Wagner was a man of iron energy. Almost small of stature, he seemed to grow to gigantic size when before his orchestra. His powerful head, with its sharply defined features, his wonderfully penetrating eyes, his mobile face, which gave expression to every emotion, every thought, can never be forgotten. His body stood motionless, but his eyes glittered, glowed, pierced; his fingers worked nervously, and electric currents seemed to pass through the air to each individual musician; an invisible force entered the hearts of all; every man thrilled with him, for he could not escape the glance of this great man. Wagner held everybody bound to him as by a magical chain; the musicians had to perform wonders, for they could not do otherwise. At first things went topsy-turvy at rehearsals, because of the impatience of the master, who wanted everything to be good at once; the strange, illustrative movements of his long bâton startled and puzzled the musicians until they learned that the musical bars were not dominant, but the phrase, the

melody, or the expression ; but soon the glance caught the attention of the men, they became infused with the magical fluid, and the master had them all in his hands. Then the meanest orchestra grew and played gloriously, the tones became imbued with life and expression, the most rigorous rhythm and the loftiest emotional expression ruled, and everything was reflected in the face of Wagner. All hung on his glance, and he seemed to see them all at once. Once I sat beside a great actor who for the first time saw Wagner exercise this potency of look and facial expression. He stared at Wagner as if he had been an apparition from beyond the grave, and could not take his eyes off him. Afterward he told me that Wagner's face was more eloquent than all the actors in the world with all their powers of expression combined. Whoever saw Wagner, and came into contact with him in Vienna, Berlin, Hamburg, Budapest, Russia, or Switzerland, will certainly never forget this influence. He seldom conducted, but one must have seen him conduct a symphony by Beethoven in order to learn how much there is hidden away among the notes of that classic giant, and how much can be conjured out of them. To my thinking, Wagner is not only the mightiest of all musical geniuses, but also the greatest conductor that ever lived.

TRIBUTES FROM GREAT SINGERS

BY LILLI LEHMANN-KALISCH

A LARGE part of my musical existence died with Anton Seidl and only a sweet memory remains where I always quietly hoped to see new blossoms spring up in profusion.

Our joint work belongs to the most sacred memories of my career. It comprises not only the time we spent together at Bayreuth, where young Seidl assisted in moving the Rhine Daughters, but also a period of equal importance to both of us the German opera at New York.

There are few managers who could lay claim to one thing which the artist singer so often must dispense with: that an artist and a leader of singers, who felt and breathed with them, stood in the orchestra.

That complete devotion which seemed to flow from his bâton, the earnestness of his personality, when he *stood* at his desk—for he did not sit down like so many others, whom I consider in the wrong, because the leader, when erect, always secures greater attention and does not tempt people to take things easily, at the same time exacting from the orchestra increased esteem for art itself and the work in hand—influenced everybody upon the stage and inspired us to do our best.

All this still lives in my heart and sounds in my ear and I remember with deepest gratitude the glorious time when we were permitted to work with Albert Niemann, Marianne Brandt, Emil Fischer and others who may never return, where those sacred ties, which do not always unite all the artists accidentally thrown together upon the same stage, firmly united us all. Seidl said little, but we felt everything without hearing his words, and the heavenly contentment with which the performances of *Euryanthe*, *Fidelio*, *Tristan* and the *Ring* filled our hearts can be compared with nothing in this world.

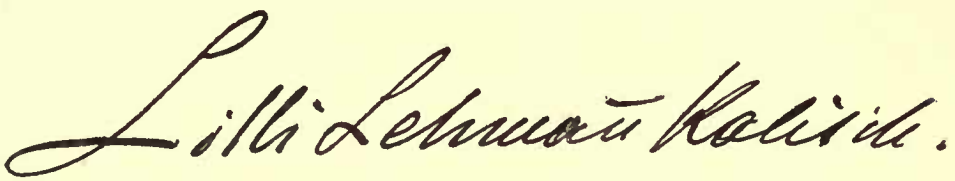
All our work was chastened by the devotion which seemed to flow from him—a musical-electrical current connected him with us and flowed back from us to him—as it *must* be if perfection is to be attained.

He was always at the opera house an hour before the time set for the performance; he looked after everything, watched everybody, to make sure that nothing was missing, that everything was in its place. Many leaders might learn from his wise way of taking care of everything.

I saw him for the last time at his house, where he gave well-meant and very good advice to young artists, in his kind and quiet way. He went to Chicago and left us in his charming, hospitable home to the kind care of his dear wife.

I never saw him again! When the dreadful news came I trembled for hours; I could not believe it. Still it was true! He too is gone and with him the hope that we should once more feel together, again unite and give to the people what inspired us and filled us with ecstasy: noble art! All those who really feel, who possess a rich and grand soul, understand it, and this ability to feel and to appreciate is the only gratitude that nobody can decline, and *he* least of all.

For this reason Seidl will live as long as one of all those souls remains, which have felt with him what he has given to us all.



Col. Grunewald.

BY MARIANNE BRANDT

I MET Anton Seidl for the first time at Bayreuth in 1876. I am not quite certain whether he was one of the two devotees of Wagner who acted as prompters while I sang Waltraute, after studying the part during the night because Madame Jaide had suddenly become hoarse, and the *Siegfried* performance was thereby threatened; but I believe the two were Seidl and Mottl. Standing in the wings behind artificial rocks, they helped me not only with the libretto, but also by calling out words of encouragement, which was quite necessary, for I was half dead from fright and excitement.

I became better acquainted with Seidl in the summer of 1881. Wagner had sent for me and asked me to sing Kundry. At that time Wagner was going over the *Parsifal* score with Seidl, who was the favorite of the whole family. With Seidl I studied Kundry's narrative at Wahnfried, and he played the accompaniment when I sang before Wagner. It was the first time that Wagner heard this part sung by a female voice; his eyes were full of tears. He ran out of the room and called "Cosima, Cosima, come quickly; you must hear it." I had

to sing the part again for Mrs. Wagner, and when I had finished Wagner said, "What I have done there is not so bad, after all."

Wagner was at that time in very good humor, and we often made music after supper. One evening, while Seidl played the piano, Wagner ran suddenly into his library and brought a big book, which he opened and placed on the piano. What was it? Rossini's *Othello*. Wagner turned the leaves for a while, told Seidl to play this or that air, softly humming the tune. When he found a trio for soprano, tenor and bass, he cried, "We must sing this!" and we started at once. Wagner sang bass, Seidl the tenor part, and I, Desdemona, soprano. It was a very florid air, where one after the other sings his passages until all three voices are joined together, and we let them roll out just as they came, of course almost bursting with laughter. I never again saw Wagner and Seidl so merry as they were that evening.

Later, in 1882, came Angelo Neumann's tour with Seidl. I had accepted an engagement with Neumann for the few months during which the Vogls were not at liberty, and sang for the first time under Seidl's leadership in December, 1882, in the Victoria Theatre at Berlin, the part of Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre*. Here I made the acquaintance of Auguste Kraus, the lovely Sieglinde, for whom I felt warm friendship from the first moment and ever afterwards.

That tour was a continuous triumph for Seidl, and brought him besides his greatest treasure, his dear wife. But I had a little clash with him. In March, 1883, in Darmstadt, I had to sing Brünnhilde in the *Götterdämmerung*. Seidl, who was as much overworked as the whole orchestra, could not hold a rehearsal, and all I could do was to arrange a superficial rehearsal of this gigantic part with the assistant leader and the piano

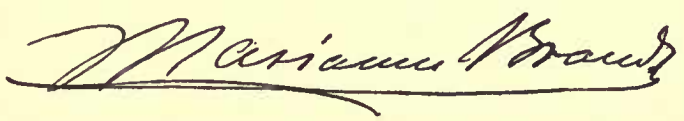
transcription, while Seidl led at the performance in the evening. Anybody who knows the difficulties of the part will understand what that means. I suppose there was considerable lack of steadiness, but everything went off pretty well. But during the finale I was completely entranced and probably dragged the *tempi* a little, for suddenly my exaltation was rudely broken by several sharp raps of the bâton, while Seidl's eyes were flashing fire at me. I was naturally angry with him because he had corrected me so conspicuously before the audience; but when, later on, he told me that my Brünnhilde was very good, the old friendship was renewed.

Then followed, in 1884, my first trip to America. Seidl was newly married and brought his Gustl on board, whom he recommended to me most warmly. We occupied adjoining staterooms, and while the storms were raging I often heard the young bride, who almost never slept, sob pitifully: "My poor husband, poor Toni, I shall never see you again!" We had a terrible passage and I was so seasick myself that I could not cheer up the dear woman as I wished to do, and she had to bear her sorrow all alone.

Everybody still remembers the time I spent in New York and the work that Seidl did there is a part of history. We remained intimate friends until my farewell season and when I left, Seidl gave me his portrait with the words Lene sings in the *Meistersinger:*

"'T were fine, if we should often meet again! A. Seidl."

Alas! it was otherwise ordained. I never met Seidl again! I cannot describe how deeply his sudden death has affected me!



BY LILLIAN NORDICA DÖME

TIME makes the more unreconcilable the loss of Anton Seidl. His life was one with his art which was the moving inspiration of that life itself, and his enthusiasm was a forceful influence upon those about him.

His rare knowledge and musicianship, dedicated first of all to the works of Wagner, made him a powerful factor in their advancement, and in the personality of the man was the ability to get great work alike out of artists and orchestra quietly.

Mr. Seidl was the first to bring out the degrees of shading exactly as Wagner wrote them, and how many pianos and pianissimos he placed in his scores—and how many conductors have said that it was impossible to give them! Yet there was always the example of Anton Seidl to quote in silencing these assertions of impossibility.

His learning was so profound and extended to all channels bearing on Wagnerian subjects, particularly, with such thoroughness that his reasons were irrefutable. He could act out every part in the music dramas and his exactness extended to the multitude of details accepted as minor, but of such importance. One day after devoting three hours of his time to me, going over the score of *Tristan*, we went to a Broadway store to buy a veil for Isolde in the second act. He asked for samples of various kinds of tulle, and, when they came, he seized one after another at one end and flirted the other rapidly through the air, to the great astonishment of the shoppers and shop-girls, who were not quite sure whether he was in his right mind. But he knew just what he wanted.

With the quenching of the torch he was just as insistent

that it should be thrust into water and not sand to prevent the spreading of the flames from escaping alcohol. His devotion to his work in these details was inexhaustible. When matters of importance claimed his attention there seemed room in his mind for nothing else. In encouragement he was always ready with those earnest in their strivings and his knowledge was at their disposal, a knowledge that meant to so many a help to advancement in their art. Even in the days when my voice was light he used often to say to me: "Wait, you will sing Wagner one of these days."

When I did, and began to study the role of Venus it was Mr. Seidl who taught it to me. Again it was Mr. Seidl who aided me in the first study of Elsa for Bayreuth, an aid of such authority, enthusiasm and assurance that it laid a foundation of future purpose and determination. The summer of Mr. Seidl's conductorship at Covent Garden I saw him oftener than had been my privilege at any time. He would sit on my balcony at the Savoy Hotel for hours at a time, thinking and smoking and smoking and thinking, his eyes wandering sometimes to the scene below on the embankment or the barges floating in the sunshine on the Thames.

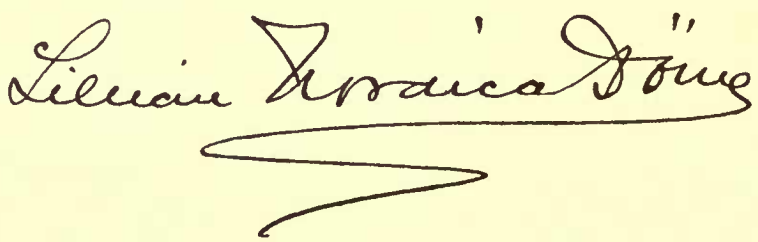
He was homesick for his wife, his dogs and the mountains, and things perhaps were not always going as he wished. Those meditations seemed a genuine comfort to him, and when they were done he was ready for a conversation in which his gentleness and his devotion to his work always shone out.

The modesty that characterized him was notable, but woe to the individual who imposed upon that modesty. It was an imposition not likely to be repeated.

No rehearsal was long enough to exhaust his patience, and he seemed at such times to have effaced all thoughts of his own feelings in the one desire for a complete interpretation.

Homage has been granted to other authorities who have gone out into the world armed with original Bayreuth tradition, but surely to none can it be more sincerely given than to Anton Seidl. It was his mission and the dominant thought of his life, not obtrusively but with a straightforward forcefulness that made itself felt, that encouraged and cultivated a reflection of the same high qualities in those about him and engaged in the presentations. To have sung under his bâton was to have been impressed with all these things, and yet in sustaining his ideals by untiring effort there never seemed with Mr. Seidl any thought that he was doing more than the humblest would have done to secure a proper standard of performance. His sincerity, like his enthusiasm, was infectious; if the one aroused those engaged to more vital interest the other helped make that interest of the enduring kind. When a man of such high purpose comes into the world he impresses an influence extending so far beyond his time that it is not given to us to estimate it. We can only feel that the best appreciation that we had to give him was far short of his high value. To a great cause in music he brought all his strength and self-effacement. He was content to rest in the shadow of his work, claiming nothing for himself but that he sustained his duty, and that with a simplicity belonging only to the truly great.

While the name of Wagner lives the name of Anton Seidl will live. The conductor took up the message of the composer, establishing tradition, implanting high motives and making his life a lesson that must live until the end with those of us who were associated with him or who knew his work.



BY EMMA EAMES-STORY

A REGRET too deep for words fills my heart at my home-coming this year. Regret for the loss of one whom it was a privilege to have known—Anton Seidl. We, the artists who sang under his direction, must feel his absence even more keenly than his public.

He was a leader in truth—never a martinet. With all his knowledge and his perfect taste, we always felt that he had our interests at heart, that when leading an opera he forgot himself in his desire to bring out the best in us, realizing that only by so doing could he bring out the best in the work. I can only with hopeless reiteration say that his loss as a leader cannot be made good. He had too personal and too distinct a place in our hearts.

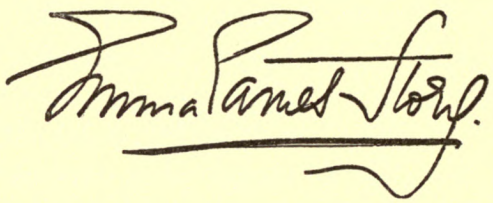
As a man, unfortunately, I did not know him as well. My opportunities for knowing him were, with one or two exceptions, found only when my work threw me with him. His geniality always impressed me, and one thing in his character appealed most particularly to me—his love of dogs. One night during my last winter here—the winter of 1896–97—he dined with me and enchanted me the whole evening with stories of his delightful Dachshunds. His feeling for our dumb friends and his attitude towards them indicated what a wealth of heart he had. That evening I was drawn toward him more nearly than ever before, as I too love and understand as he did the dog as an individuality.

The last time I saw him was when he went with me in Bayreuth to call on Frau Wagner, in August, 1897. I shall always remember him at that time and the little twinkle of amusement that *would* come unbidden into his eyes. I did not

wish to sing and had only gone to make a friendly visit with the keen intention of not allowing myself to be persuaded to do so. Mr. Seidl wheedled me into doing so, so gently that before I knew it I was singing.

When the news of his death came I could not accept it. Even now the numbness of the blow again comes over me when I think of our loss. A sense of loss that overwhelms me in spite of the fact that I have no right to feel it as strongly and as personally as I do.

He it was that urged me to study the rôle of Sieglinde. He said that it was a "good bridge" between Wagner's lyric and his heavier dramatic rôles. Alas! that after all I should not have sung it with him!



BY ANTON SCHOTT

WHEN Richard Wagner wrote these lines on a score, which he dedicated to his pupil,

"For Seidl alone himself has sung
Into the *Ring of the Nibelung*,"

he knew exactly what he was saying. I had the great good fortune—I cannot call it anything else—of studying this work with Seidl, and singing it under his bâton in half the cities of Europe. I may say that I learned to know Wagner—and through him Seidl—thoroughly. Yet I did not fully realize how

great Seidl was till I afterwards sang for, and came in conflict with other eminent "Wagner conductors" of the time in various cities. I became convinced that he was, indeed, the only one who had penetrated into the innermost secrets of the Tetralogy, and that no other conductor would have succeeded in what he accomplished so surprisingly—arousing the enthusiasm (above all peoples) of the Italians, who had never heard a note of the mature Wagner. It was the very spirit of Wagner that was imparted to all of us, through the medium of Anton Seidl; it inspired us to deeds of enthusiasm, and the public responded cordially. In view of our limited number of players and other insufficient resources for such places as the Apollo Theatre in Rome, for example, the results achieved were little short of marvelous. Such difficulties are usually withheld from the knowledge of the public; but we, who were behind the scenes, knew them. We knew that it was a most audacious thing on the manager's part, to subject this work of genius to such a test. But he had Anton Seidl.

So thoroughly was Anton Seidl imbued with the *spirit* of Wagner's art that he did not hesitate, on at least one occasion that I know of, to sacrifice the *letter* to it. I studied the part of Siegmund with him. At the place, "Ha, who passed, who entered here?" before the love song, Wagner prescribes, "Siegmund gently leads Sieglinde to the bench, so that she sits beside him." When, at the first performance (Auguste Kraus was the Sieglinde), I tried to follow these directions, it seemed unnatural that at this moment, when Siegmund stands with his arm round her, while the moonlight from the opened door floods the room, there should be the slightest motion—which must infallibly break the charm and bring her to a realizing sense of the situation—even the gentlest leading of Sieglinde seemed to me

rude violence in a situation where the dropping of a needle might have destroyed the spell, whereas the prescribed action is afterwards brought about naturally by the course of the poem and the music, and there still remain twenty-five minutes for them to sit on the bench. In brief, I was unable to follow the directions; my legs refused to move. Seidl declared, "Hm! in reality you are right, but you must not—we must follow Wagner's own directions." I did so for a time, but one evening—it was at Bologna—I informed Sieglinde that she must be prepared for a change. I refused to budge; whereat there was great excitement behind the scenes, stage manager and impressario running about whispering directions to me, but I did not move till I thought the time had arrived.

When the curtain fell the public applauded frantically, but the impresario and stage manager greeted me with a cold douche of censure. A moment later Seidl came on the stage, embraced me with a laugh, and exclaimed, "Never do it any other way as long as you live. Had Wagner lived to see it he would have given you his blessing." I followed his advice, with the result of angering other conductors to whom the letter was more sacred than the spirit. There you have a picture of Anton Seidl and of other conductors. He was liberal, they pedantic.

It was interesting to hear Seidl's observations regarding the differences in the reception of the *Nibelung's Ring* in different countries. Often he remarked how it would have pleased Wagner if he could have lived to hear how instantly the Italians, above all others, appreciated the best things in his operas—things that had been overlooked by the public in Berlin and even at Bayreuth. In *Rheingold*, for instance, the Italians singled out for applause precisely the four situations which Wagner himself had often referred to as the most effective. They went so far

as to stop the performance and compel Seidl to repeat what was wanted. He did so most unwillingly, of course, and yet he felt it was a great triumph for Wagner. "Oh, that he could have lived to witness this!" (The four places thus singled out were the Erda scene, introduction to Nibelung cave, Mime's narrative, Rhine daughters at the close.) Seidl sometimes said, "Perhaps, if Wagner had lived, he would have changed his mind in regard to what he wrote concerning applause."

In conclusion I cannot refrain from expressing the pride I feel in having been instrumental in bringing Anton Seidl to America. Having been with him so long I knew his value, and after the death of Dr. Leopold Damrosch I kept recommending him as the one man to appoint in his place. He was consequently engaged and brought over; but I had broken my own neck, for what I had done was never forgiven me in certain quarters. My plans and proposals were accepted, but I myself was left out in the cold.

ANTON SCHOTT.

BY GIUSEPPE CAMPANARI

PREVIOUS to 1894 Anton Seidl was merely an acquaintance of mine, but when, during this year, he toured the eastern States with his orchestra, with me as a soloist, we were together constantly for three weeks and our acquaintance ripened into friendship. This trip I remember as one of the most enjoyable episodes in my artistic career, though there were plenty of hardships and the profits were mostly swallowed up by the traveling expenses, as is usually the case when an orchestra goes on the road.

It was during this trip that on one occasion an accident befell the engine, making further travel impossible for the time being, but, as luck would have it, we were just at the outskirts of a village. It being nearly noon the disgusted musicians tramped into town to its one hotel. This proved to be the usual thing in the line of country hotels, with the distinction that it boasted a piano, and on it were some piano duets, the quality of which it would not be polite to discuss in music circles.

Mr. Seidl pounced upon these, and pressing me into service proceeded to break the monotony of that particular hotel. The ubiquitous loungers and village philosophers straggled in and soon there was an audience. The amusement that this incident afforded the performers cannot be described and several times did the accumulating humor of the situation interfere seriously with Mr. Seidl's technique. The redeeming feature about the questionable music was its quantity, as there was enough to enable us to gorge our listeners with music until the dinner bell rang.

After a meal, the memory of which still haunts me, word was received that the engine had been repaired and was ready to proceed, when the hotel proprietor begged, as a favor, that some more music be made before we departed. "Certainly," responded Mr. Seidl, and collaring me on his way to the parlor, dragged me to the piano while the train was held until the last song had been rendered. We left immediately afterward, carrying with us the profuse thanks of the assembly for our "tunes."

Mr. Seidl was a great lover of humor; he occasionally indulged this propensity by writing funny letters to his friends. I have found one of these among my papers. It was written on the same trip at Pittsfield, Mass., in purposely ludicrous Italian, and was intended to be a compliment to my voice and an invita-

tion to dine in his room, No. 138 (thirteen eight) at the hotel. It reads as follows:

Caro mio Campanari!

Tuo voce e splendido; domani notte tu cantare brillante, e mangare in numero tredeci otto. A rivederci, tuo amico.

ANTONIO SEIDLINO.

Pittsfeldo, Mass., 1894.

The last time that Mr. Seidl conducted *Die Meistersinger* (in Italian) at the Metropolitan, I had been entrusted with the part of Kothner. After a scene in the first act, this character does not appear again until the last act when only the waving of a flag and the singing of a few words fall to its lot, so that this intermission meant several hours of waiting, and my "make-up" naturally prevented me from sitting in the auditorium and enjoying the opera. I begged Mr. Seidl to excuse me after the first act and allow the flag to be waved by one of the chorus.

"No," he replied; "remain for the master's sake! Go to your dressing room and I will send you something to keep you company." I did as he had bidden, and soon after the boy brought a bottle of champagne, two cigars and Seidl's compliments. At the proper moment, during the last act, the original Kothner appeared and thus Wagner's dignity was upheld at the expense of Mr. Seidl's purse.

G. Campanari

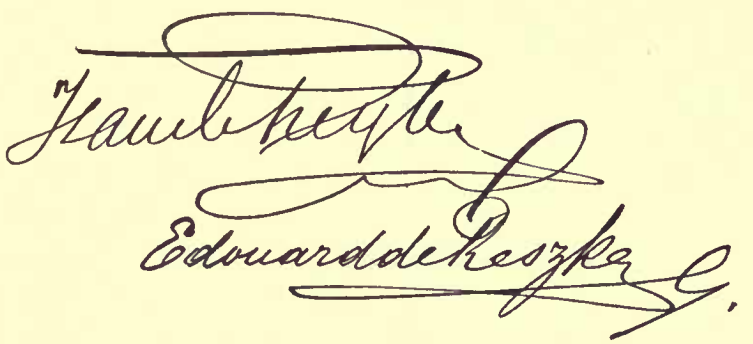
BY JEAN AND EDOUARD DE RESZKE

THE death of Anton Seidl was felt very deeply not only by those who, like ourselves, were privileged to call themselves his friends, but by the whole musical world at large. It would indeed be difficult to overestimate what his loss means to all lovers of opera.

Nowadays so much is expected of a first-rate conductor that it is no marvel if he be a rara avis. The purely technical knowledge which is required for a leader to master the intricacies of a modern orchestral score well enough to secure merely a correct and smooth performance of it is in itself considerable, and yet this is but the A B C of the conductor's art. At the performance of any orchestral work, whether ancient or modern, the conductor alone represents the composer and it is he who must put into the interpretation not only the spirit and atmosphere of the work as a whole, but all those thousand and one subtle nuances which it would be well-nigh impossible for the composer to indicate in black and white in his score, and which nevertheless contribute so greatly to the life of the performance. And in the case of an operatic work even this is not all that is required of the ideal conductor. Here he must be in sympathy with the singers, he must understand their individual interpretation of their respective parts and help to give it its full expression without, however, detracting in any way from the unity of the whole performance. And it was just in this that Seidl was so wonderful. He was thoroughly imbued, from his boyhood, with the spirit of the works he was destined to interpret, and he added to this an instinct which is indeed rare among orchestral con-

ductors of the modern school; he understood singing, seemed to know by intuition exactly what the singer would do in every case and always helped him to do it well. But he did not accomplish this by following the singer slavishly. There are many conductors who can follow a singer in a ritardando such as singers love to make at the close of a musical phrase, but there are few who know exactly how to catch up the rhythm again and restore the equilibrium, as Seidl did, without apparently affecting the shape of the musical period in the least.

And how dear Seidl's whole heart was in his work! What trouble he took over every detail! At rehearsals he was conductor, stage-manager, mechanician, electrician—all in one; and when it came to the performance the artists had only to look at his authoritative glance and inspiring beat to gain absolute confidence, and feel that they would be ably steered through any difficulty that might arise. In the course of our work with Seidl our admiration for him soon grew to warm affection, and we lose in him not only an incomparable artist, who always gave us invaluable assistance and support in all our work, but also a very dear friend, who enlivened many an otherwise weary hour for us with his genial companionship. We shall never forget him.



FACSIMILES OF
ENGROSSED RESOLUTIONS

THE

DIRECTORS

OF THE

Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company

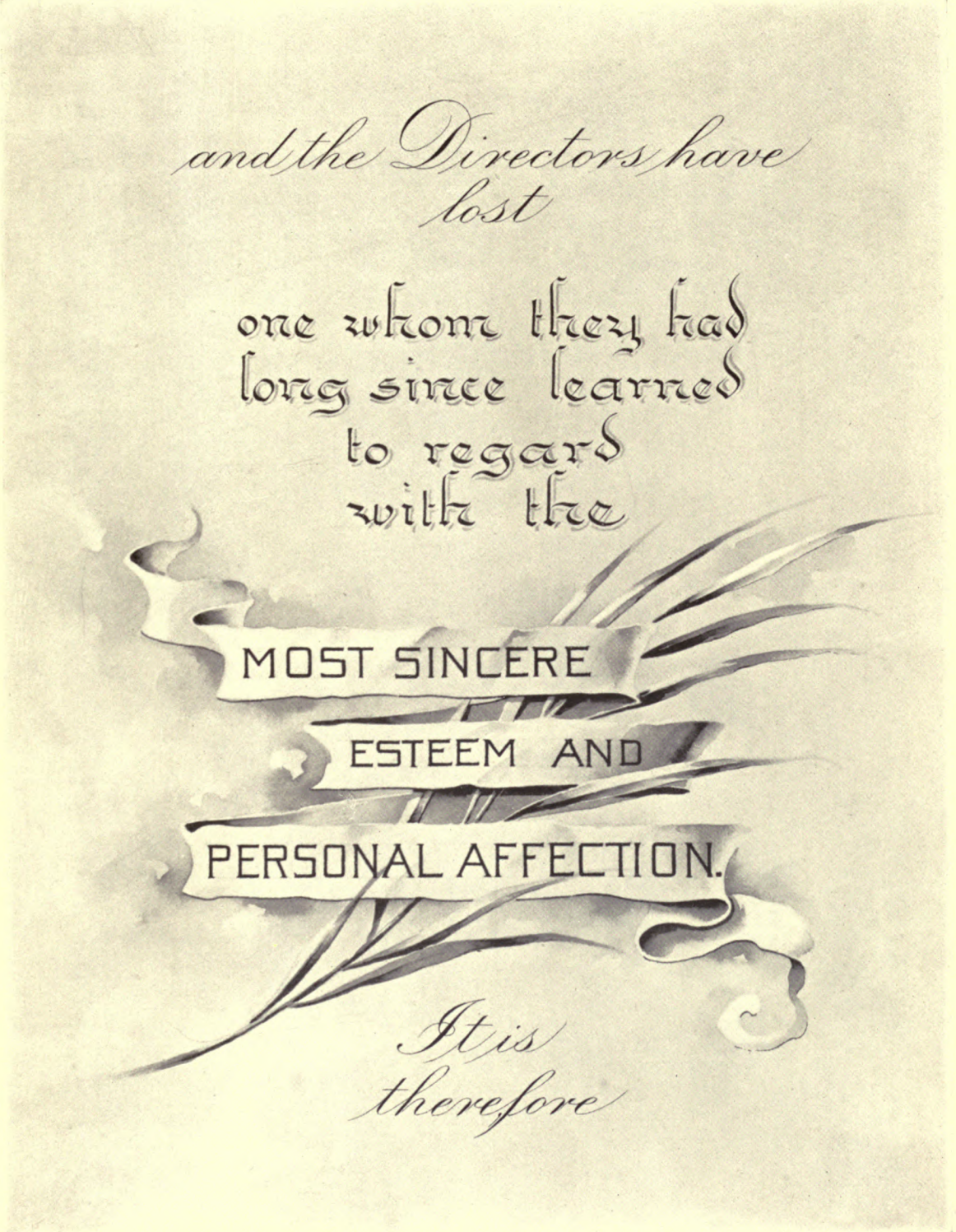
have learned with profound regret of the death of

Herr Anton Seidl

on Monday, March 28, 1898, in the full maturity of his exceptional artistic powers.

In his death the Metroplitan Opera House has lost a conductor who had been associated for more than ten years with the best work of the opera; musical art throughout the world has lost

one of its most brilliant masters.


and the Directors have lost
one whom they had long since learned to regard with the
MOST SINCERE
ESTEEM AND
PERSONAL AFFECTION.
It is therefore

Resolved,

That the Directors attend the funeral in a body, and that a copy of these resolutions be sent to the widow of

Herr Seidl.



G. Gilman.
President.

G. S. Bowdoin
Treasurer.

The whole civilized world has been grief stricken by the death of

Anton Seidl.

Since the demise of his preceptor and friend, the Shakespeare of Music, William Richard Wagner, no loss so keen has been experienced by the musical world, as in the unexpected calling away of

Anton Seidl

in the very prime of his life, at the very zenith of his almost unparalleled career.

irreparable, unforgettable, not to be lessened, as is ordinarily the case, by the efflux of time, but its realization is to be increased as the unsated demands for his leadership shall arise.

Vast undertakings projected by the Company embodied as their chief feature the task of producing, in manner unequalled and probably unattempted, the great classics of operatic music, especially the mighty productions of the Wagnerian School.

When the services of

Anton Seidl,

as the conductor of these projected works, had been secured, the success of the enterprise, however ambitious its designs,

seemed certainly assured.

The acknowledged and unique genius of the man, supplemented, as we knew it would be, by the laudable ambition frequently expressed by him to make these productions the

crowning work of his life

and to secure their artistic perfection to a degree

beyond anything before attempted,

joined with the knowledge that he had never failed to achieve his wildest artistic dreams, justified the indulgence of the hope that even the magnificent similar productions at Bayreuth

would be outdone.

To some extent, at least, if not in great degree, these glorious anticipations must fail of fulfillment, because of his too early

summons from us.

Moreover,- as the result of general acknowledgement in this community of his charming individuality, of the magic and witchery of the baton that he held, of his devotion to his beloved art, of the divine afflatus with which he was possessed,- those foremost in the musical world had

organized a permanent orchestra, largely, if not solely, with the view of securing his personal services during what was anticipated to be a long lifetime.

That his death will be a death-blow to that conception it is hoped will not be the case, but the sentiments of its members

prove how serious

to this important adjunct to operatic enterprise in our great metropolis his demise has proven.

As a man he has our affection, as a friend our

love, as a musician, our adoration.

We offer to his memory no sculptured urn or monumental bust, but that which he would most have loved, our resolve to continue the work, with such substituted aid as we can summon, resolving to bring it to a standard of perfection approximating that which under his guidance it would certainly have reached.

Resolved, That these sentiments of appreciation be spread upon our minutes and that an engrossed copy thereof be transmitted to his widow, with whose sad bereavement we sincerely sympathize.

Resolutions unanimously adopted by the Directors of the Maurice Grau Opera Company, at a meeting held April 25th 1898.

Edward Lauterbach.
Vice President.

Ernest Goerlitz
Secretary.

At a meeting held by the Board of Directors of the

Musical Mutual Protective Union,

the President, Sylvester A. Murphy, submitted the following resolution which was adopted:

Whereas, The sudden and untimely death of

ANTON SEIDL

in the prime of a brilliant career has caused an irreparable loss to musicians throughout the civilized world; and

Whereas, The musicians and music lovers of our country have lost a devoted and inseparable friend, dear to all, and

Whereas, The members of the Musical Mutual Protective Union of which he was

AN HONORED MEMBER,

deeply lament their loss,

THEREFORE BE IT

Resolved, That the Musical Mutual Protective Union tender to the grief stricken family of our late devoted and loving friend,

Anton Seidl

our deepest regrets and sincere sympathy in their trying hour and bereavement. And be it further

Resolved, That a record of these resolutions be inscribed on the minutes of this Society, and a copy thereof be engrossed and sent to the family of the deceased.

Sylvester A. Murphy
President of the Musical Mutual Protective Union.

John Matthews, Secretary. Ignaz Rosen, Treasurer. Charles Leger, Vice President.

TRUSTEES:

Fred Wasshuson, Jr. Hermann Hinke. Max Schmidt.

EXECUTIVE BOARD:

W. E. Whittier, Henry Theeds. W. W. Vokins, Andreas Schweitl. Dan'l. Walsh. Henry Beckett, Herbert L. Clark.

JOHN D. WILLIAMSON, NEW YORK.

At a special meeting
OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE
Manuscript Society
of New York.

held on Wednesday March Thirtieth, 1898,
the following Preamble and Resolutions were unanimously adopted.

Whereas. The sudden death of our honored and beloved
musical conductor, friend and associate,

MR. ANTON SEIDL,

stricken down suddenly when apparently in the best of his
powers, has taken from us a man so thoroughly devoted to his art
and with such depth of feeling for his associates, that
he has been recognized by us as **a pillar of our Society.**

THEREFORE, **Resolved.**

That by the death of Anton Seidl,
the Manuscript Society loses one of its most honored members, one who
stood for the best qualities of the Man and the Artist, and who appreciated
to the full the purposes for which this Society was organized.

RESOLVED.

That by the death of Anton Seidl, this Community has lost
a great and valued musician.
and a musical director whose genius, often displayed in the concerts of
this Society, was known and acknowledged in every part of the world.

Resolved. That we mourn with loving hearts the loss of
our fellow member.

Resolved. That we tender to his bereaved wife our expressions
of sincere condolence and sympathy in her affliction.

Resolved.

That a copy of these resolutions be properly engrossed and
presented to Mrs. Seidl.

John S. Burdett

First Vice President.
For the Board of Directors.


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Finck, Henry Theophilus
Anton Seidl

Music

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